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The Human Animal: Strange Transformations in Fourteenth-Century Middle English Romance

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The Human Animal: Strange Transformations in Fourteenth-Century Middle English Romance

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Kathy L. Gutierrez (1959 – 2014)

Cheerleader, Crusader, and Mother

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The Human Animal: Strange Transformations in Fourteenth-Century Middle English Romance

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This dissertation investigates fourteenth-century Middle English romances' questioning of medieval definitions of the human and nonhuman animal. While the field of animal studies conceptually understands the redundancy in the phrase *human animal*, medieval thought focused less on a model of human and *nonhuman* animal and more often depicted a binary opposition of human against and above the animal. Largely set by the works of Thomas Aquinas, this prevailing medieval definition of the human defined the human as rational other animals as irrational and object-like. Yet certain romances revise the paradigm of the human as *the* rational animal in such a way as to undermine its presumption of human exceptionalism and reinscribe the human into the category of animal. The Middle English chivalric romance of the fourteenth century plays on and reinterprets its French and Anglo-Norman predecessors to emphasize a full reimagining of animal definitions. In demonstrating this phenomenon, this project first demonstrates the break down the definition of human as exceptional animal via rationality in *Bevis of Hampton*: chapter one examines the rational and affective portrayal of the horse Arondel and suggests said horse enters a state of becoming-hero. This dissertation then builds upon

that fracture to exhibit a reversal of the hunter/hunted roles that further displace the human from its place in the species hierarchy in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: the second chapter explores the depiction of Sir Gawain's courtly test as a hunting sequence all its own in which Gawain ultimately skins himself of his hide. The project then concludes by illustrating human and nonhuman animal definitions as based in performance more than divinely-granted exceptionalism in *William of Palerne*: chapter three considers how representations of transformed and disguised characters invite confusion between species categories through comedic playacting. This research implies that, at least safely within the fantasy of romance, fourteenth-century England exhibited a fascination with questioning contemporary paradigms and an unexpected freedom to imagine an alternative definition of human and nonhuman identity.

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Introduction: Defining the Human with the Nonhuman Animal

> Plato defined man thus: 'Man is a two-footed, featherless animal,' and was much praised for the definition; so Diogenes plucked a cock and brought it into his school, and said, 'This is Plato's man.'
>
> - Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*[1]

In the fourteenth-century Middle English romance, *Ywain and Gawain*, Sir Ywain passes out in a deep swoon after accidentally falling on his own sword (2059ff).[2] Believing the knight to be dead, Ywain's lion companion thrashes violently about as though mad with grief (2072). In his great "sorow" (2078), the lion "stirt" (2079) or 'hastened' to commit suicide: "[he] toke þe swerde bytwix his fete; / Up he set it by a stane, / And þare he wald himself have slane" (2080-2082) — he took the sword between his feet, set it up by a stone, and there he would have slain himself. Ywain's lion not only seeks to kill himself in his overwhelming grief but also attempts to do so in a most unusual and dramatic way: by throwing himself upon a blade. While the lion's behavior may be an attempt to mime Ywain's accident, the manner in which he does so is unquestionably unnatural for the big cat.[3] Anatomically speaking, the lion's action makes little sense considering his lack of opposable thumbs: he grabs the sword not with his mouth but "bytwix his fete" (2080), or between his feet, as a cat might try to catch a fly. The image the text paints is awkward and unwieldy as the lion must stand on his hind-legs in order to grab the

sword between his forepaws and, holding the blade in that manner, maneuver the sword and himself to prop it against the stone as he requires. Even setting aside the debate of whether nonhuman animals are self-aware enough to deliberately commit suicide,[4] the lion's methods imply a level of intelligent reasoning: knowing that the sword can kill him, the lion logically reasons that he must arrange the blade in such a way that he can throw himself upon it in order to complete his objective. He uses simple tools — an ability exclusively attributed to humans until as recently as the mid-twentieth century[5] — to create a mechanism for his suicide.

Fortunately, Ywain rouses before the lion can dramatically throw himself onto the sword, and Ywain is aghast when he sees what his companion meant to do: the knight laments that his companion was so eager to commit suicide for love of him (2097-2098) and proclaims that should the lion have killed himself, "'Þan sold I, sertes, by more right / Sla my self for swilk a wyght / Þat I have for my foly lorn"' (2097-2101), or 'then should I, certainly, more rightly slay myself for such a creature (man or nonhuman animal) that I have lost for my folly.'[6] Ywain's despairing speech creates an equivalence between his and the lion's lives: if one is lost then the other is understood as forfeit. Ywain perceives intrinsic and symbiotic values in the lion's life, such that if his companion dies he should "by more right" — a phrase that evokes both moral and legal justice[7] — kill himself to balance the loss with an equal exchange as though this "wyght" were more 'man' than nonhuman 'animal.' Yet the lion remains a lion, and the poem in no way indicates that he changes his shape. The romance only suggests, through the lion's behavior and Ywain's perception of him, that the nonhuman animal can be a rational animal.

However, such a portrayal is counter to the prevailing medieval paradigm of human and nonhuman animal definitions — namely, that of the Great Chain of Being.[8] The Chain defines

each individual thing on its hierarchy as "differing from that immediately above and that immediately below it by the 'least possible' degree of difference" in an infinite graduation that encompasses all things in existence.[9] For Thomas Aquinas in particular, that sliver of difference constituted one single distinction of mind and body: man surpasses the other animals via his mental capacity. Just as man shares in the animality of the body below, he shares equally in the intellectual capacity of the divine category above. In short, Aquinas defines man as having an immortal soul and rational mind and therefore as a person with intrinsic value, while the nonhuman animal, being irrational and defined by instrumental value, as merely a thing. While Aquinas categorizes humans as the "highest of the 'complete animals,'" he nonetheless places man as separate from and *above* other animals.[10] Humans are exceptional, Aquinas insists, because humans have reason. Nonhuman animals, instead, possess merely instinct, which Aquinas likens to the "inevitable upward motion of fire" or to "the action of inanimate objects" in its simplicity.[11] And yet, we see that Ywain's lion does not behave according to a simple, inevitable motion. Quite the contrary, this animal behaves in direct contradiction to the self-preservative reactions that should govern it and moreover displays some level of rational cogitation. That Ywain's lion attempts to commit suicide, and that Ywain himself reacts with such powerful remorse, implies that the lion's life holds some intrinsic value to itself and others beyond its instrumental use.

My dissertation focuses on that sticking point: the tension between romance portrayals of nonhuman, rational animals and the context of the opposing paradigm in medieval thought. If we rely on Aquinas's distinction — that reason is the marker of humanity alone — then nonhuman animals like the intelligent lion in *Ywain and Gawain* complicates contemporary distinctions of

what it means to be human. Do these behaviors indicate, by Aquinas's definition, that the lion is human? That question serves as my project's overarching concern: how do these definitions, and by extension their presupposed human exceptionalism, begin to break down in Middle English romances of the fourteenth century?

Scholars of medieval studies have not much pursued this line of inquiry, though it abounds in modern animal studies. The field of animal studies itself aims to examine non-anthropocentric perspectives, or as is the case with some scholars of animal studies, to reevaluate the human perspective *as* an animal one. In this latter school of thought, the human is not a separate entity from the animal but is itself an animal. Just as a *dog animal* is an animal, so is the *human animal*. The difference, of course, is that we view the "animal" in *dog animal* as redundant, but do not assume that same tautological qualifier after "human" — do not, implicitly, deem humans to be animals at all.[12] Yet, at the time of my writing this, a perfunctory search in the International Medieval Bibliography (IMB) shows that roughly 90% of scholarly work concerning the human and nonhuman animal in medieval studies has occurred in the past twenty-five years. Only two articles include the phrase "nonhuman animal,"[13] and only three works employ the exact phrase "human animal."[14] In all of these studies, the terms are largely descriptive and not employed in the manner that the field of animal studies uses them — i.e.: depicting and emphasizing that the human *is* an animal creature. For the most part, scholars of the medieval have focused on the ethics of nonhuman animal rights and the boundary between human and other animals — concentrations that imply an anthropocentric perspective that categorizes the animal as a whole as nonhuman or as other.[15] In fact, even as scholars question the definitions of human and nonhuman animals, they often still frame their arguments around

the "human" as separate from the "animal" in general. The lack of attention to the medieval (re)definitions of human and nonhuman animals represents a lacuna in scholarship, a surprisingly untapped spring for potential insight that appears to have been largely overlooked.

My dissertation aims to do more than merely examine the boundaries between human and nonhuman animals rendered in medieval texts: it also investigates how these texts question and break down those definitional boundaries. That is not to say my project seeks to anthropomorphize or ahistorically read nonhuman animals as somehow 'more than' their animal category. Nor does my project center on nonhuman animal rights, per se, as nonhuman animals had no rights in the medieval period outside their status as property or their instrumental value to humans.[16] What my project examines is how fourteenth-century Middle English romances undermine Thomas Aquinas's definition of the human as rational and deploy a broader category that encompasses both human and nonhuman animal species. In doing so, the romances undermine the implicit human exceptionalism in Aquinas's definitions of human and other animals by depicting nonhuman animals as rational and exposing the human as a species of animal. In this process, my dissertation also focuses on *framing*. I use the constructions 'human and nonhuman animal' or 'human and other animals' to allay issues of implied bias in my — and my field's — terminology.[17]

My project focuses specifically on Middle English romances of the fourteenth century — i.e.: *Bevis of Hampton*, *Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *William of Palerne* — for cultural, literary, and historical reasons. The texts examined here continue and expand a phenomenon that we first see developing in twelfth-century saints' lives. The saints' lives depict arguably rational nonhuman animals, whose lives possess intrinsic value and emotional depth: "[t]he saints needed

only to recognize the presence of human reason," Joyce Salisbury argues, "not create it in an irrational beast."[18] The concept that nonhuman animals have intrinsic value and rational capacities counters the prevailing conception of the nonhuman-animal-as-object, much as it does later in such romances as *Ywain and Gawain*. Saints' lives' depictions of nonhuman animals in the twelfth century erode the perceived separation of human and other animals and urge a reconsideration of nonhuman animal definitions. By the fourteenth century, as this dissertation shows, that suggestion of redefinition develops into a fuller reimagining of human and nonhuman animal categories — one that implicates the human as animal and, ultimately, undermines definitions of the human as exceptional and superior to other animals.

Moreover, this reimagining seems uniquely amplified in Middle English romances. The Anglo-Norman and French — and, predominantly, twelfth-century[19] — predecessors of the romances examined here largely adhere to the separate, hierarchized paradigm of human and nonhuman animal definitions. Yet the fourteenth-century Middle English versions modify their source texts — or, in the case of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the French tradition in general — in such a way as to emphasize and expand the questioning of medieval categories of human and nonhuman animal. The fourteenth century seems historically ripe for these questions of identity: Alan Harding postulates a "crisis of the knightly class" growing from the thirteenth century, largely due to the increasing costs of chivalric equipment and the dubbing ceremony as well as the growing managerial burdens of administrative duties. Monarchs like Edward I and Henry III even issued distraints to knighthood — writs that required qualified men to become knights regardless of any desire or lack thereof to do so.[20] The concurrent rise in the fourteenth century of undubbed but chivalric esquires who could possess and display heraldic arms further

muddied the once clear distinctions that elevated knights above lower aristocratic classes. Squires became nearly indistinguishable from knights, as Maurice Keen elaborates: both came from landowning families, fought in military campaigns, and served in some regional administrative capacity.[21] The fourteenth century's increasing ambiguity of intraclass distinctions renders its texts as sites of projection: a building anxiety in chivalric identity's underpinnings creates a twin rise in the ambiguity of animal categories in the ensuing anxiety over human identity. A socially significant category crisis in fourteenth-century culture, thus, helps to prompt a reconsideration of animal categories in Middle English romance, a narrational mode that invites such speculative and conceptual freedom.

My dissertation focuses on three particular chivalric romances because they legibly pick up the embedded threads of these category investigations and reweave them to produce a unique, Middle-English construction of identity — especially of human and nonhuman animal identities. The freedom to reimagine these species definitions may be rooted in the romance mode's magical and fantastical features, which allows for a space of play that can be exercised to trespass and transcend typical category boundaries.[22] In romance, the boundaries that are so concretely defined in reality become flexible and imaginative. In this mode, one can redefine how to conceive of the human or even what it means to *be* human at all.

In demonstrating the peculiar qualities of medieval romance, my project first demonstrates how the definition of the human as the exceptional animal is broken down via rationality in *Bevis of Hampton*.[23] Entitled "Horsing around with Knights: Equine Rationality, Affective Reciprocation, and Becoming-Hero in *Bevis of Hampton*," my first chapter examines the rational and affective portrayal of the horse Arondel as depicting a horse whose relationship

with his knight is more one of equal partnership than of master/servant. Relying on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's conception of 'becoming,'[24] I explore how the text's portrayal of Arondel's rationality and affective bond with Bevis suggests the horse enters a state of becoming-hero. The romance's portrayal of Arondel implicates the nonhuman animal as a romance hero on par with its human knight and, even suggests that a nonhuman animal possesses a soul for which we should pray.

My dissertation then builds upon that fracture of human and nonhuman animal definitions to examine a reversal of the hunter/hunted roles that further displaces the human from its place in the species hierarchy in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.[25] My second chapter, "'The Most Dangerous Game': Hunting Humans and Traumatic Self-Skinning in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,"[26] reads the poem's hunting sequences not as a metaphor for — and so, subordinate to — the bedroom scenes but as the primary interpretive frame of the romance: I reimagine Gawain's courtly test as a hunting sequence all its own in which Gawain ultimately skins himself of his own hide. Relying on trauma theory's concept of traumatic echoes — specifically how the unknowable and inexpressible nature of trauma is only finally experienced through its forgetting[27] — I explore how Gawain redefines his trauma at the Green Chapel to fit into the context of a chivalric trial and, as a result, realigns his experiences with the Aquinian precept of human exceptionalism.

My project then concludes by illustrating human and nonhuman animal definitions as based more on performance than divinely-granted exceptionalism in *William of Palerne*.[28] Chapter three, "Hiding Skin and Skinning Hides: Transformation and the Vulnerability of Species Categories in *William of Palerne*," considers how representations of transformed and

disguised characters invite confusion between species categories through comedic playacting. Through its depiction of the ambiguous and fluid identities of the human and nonhuman animal, the romance simultaneously undercuts Aquinas's definition of the rational human and reformulates the Great Chain's hierarchy of differences as a lateral spectrum. The romance relies on humor, in fact, to defer and even normalize an embraced ambiguity and its undermining of divinely-granted human exceptionalism.[29]

My research thus implies that, at least within the safety of medieval romance, fourteenth-century England exhibited a fascination with questioning medieval paradigms of species hierarchy and sought an unexpected freedom to imagine an alternative definition of human and nonhuman identity. This literary reimagining suggests, in part, that romance conceived of the increasing ambiguity in aristocratic class distinctions as a matter of human identity.[30] At the very least, my project indicates — as I explore in my conclusion — a reconstruction of human and nonhuman animal definitions that is strangely unique to the Middle English translations of French traditions. But beyond this, my dissertation intimates that animal studies and ecocriticism can gain new contexts for analysis and debate from medieval literature. Even fields that seem exclusively forward-looking, such as transhumanism,[31] can benefit from this project's prompting of more research. After all, 'what is human' is one of the most basic existential questions we can ask ourselves, and the long debate over that definition and its finer points attests to our anxiety of identity. What we find here, then, is simply that people are concerned about what it means to be a human — and an animal.

[1] Diogenes Laërtius, "Life of Diogenes," in *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. C. D. Yonge, 224-248, Book VI (London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 1915), 6.231.
[2] All citations for *Ywain and Gawain* refer to line numbers in the Early English Text Society 254, eds. Albert B. Friedman and Norman T. Harrington (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). Glosses and translations rely on the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*), last modified February 2016, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/.
[3] For more on nonhuman animal companions mimicking their chivalric partners, see chapter one of this project.
[4] The scientific community relies on nonhuman animals for suicide studies, but it also tends to view suicide as an exclusively human act: while scientists can induce risk factors of suicidal ideation, such as hopelessness, in a nonhuman animal, they hold that the nonhuman animal relies on self-preservation instincts and does not possess the self-awareness needed for the "conscious, deliberate intent" behind "real suicide." As such, there have been no definitive studies on nonhuman animal suicide, though stories of the phenomenon continue to circulate in popular culture and with them the implication that nonhuman animal lives have intrinsic value to sacrifice or reject via suicide. Even in popular culture, tales of nonhuman animal suicides — dogs starving themselves after their master's death or horses drowning themselves after acute abuse — seem to serve as analogies for human self-destruction or as rhetorical tools of debate more than evidence of nonhuman animal intelligence. For more on nonhuman animal suicide, see Edmund Ramsden and Duncan Wilson, "The Nature of Suicide: Science and the Self-Destructive Animal," *Endeavor* 34, no. 1 (2010): 21-24; John T. Maltsberger, "Can a Louse Commit Suicide?"*Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention* 24, no. 4 (2003): 175-176; and Oz Malkesman, et al., "Animal Models of Suicide-Trait-Related Behaviors," *Trends in Pharmacological Sciences* 30, no. 4 (2009): 165-173; and Antonio Preti, "Suicide Among Animals: A Review of Evidence," *Psychological Reports* 101 (2007): 831-848.
[5] For more on tool-usage in nonhuman animals, see Crickette M. Sanz, Josep Call, and Christophe Boesch, eds. *Tool Use in Animals: Cognition and Ecology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and Shigeru Obayashi, et. al., "Functional Brain Mapping of Monkey Tool Use," *NueroImage* 14 (2001): 853-861.
[6] *MED*., s.v. "wight (n.)." While *wight* here likely means nonhuman 'animal,' the general flexibility of its definition, encompassing 'any creature' both human and nonhuman, fits well with this passage's equation of the lion's life with a human's. For more on the varying connotations of *wight*, see chapter one of this dissertation.
[7] Ibid., s.v. "right (n.)."
[8] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 74; and Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (1936; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 59.
[9] Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 59, 79. See also Oliva Blanchette, "Aquinas' Conception of the Great Chain of Being: A More Considered Reply to Lovejoy," in *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages*, eds. Kent Emery, Jr., Russell L. Friedman, and Andreas Speer (Leiden: Brill, 2011), esp. 185.
[10] Blanchette, "Aquinas' Conception of the Great Chain," 185; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. the English Dominican Fathers, Vol. 2 (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, ltd., 1923), 30.12.
[11] Thomas Aquinas also noted that nonhuman animals were violent and savage and that while humans could behave as beasts, humans possessed the defining feature of reason and the soul that assured them resurrection. Medieval thinkers further elaborated on the 'irrational' distinction to catalog the multitude of differences between the human and other animals, from the physical (nonhuman animals are hairier) to the emotional (nonhuman animals cannot laugh). When faced with nonhuman animals' seemingly rational or complex behaviors, medieval thinkers attributed extra senses (such as Albert the Great's *estimativa*, or the perception of intentionality) to these animals, to enable the positing of and reactionary explanations that removed any rational or logical thinking on the other animals' part. See Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, trans. English Dominican Fathers (Westminster, MD, 1952), 2, 9, 141; Albertus Magnus, "Quaestiones Super de Animalibus," in *Opera Omnia* I, ed. E. Filthaut (Münster, 1955), Q 3, 189; Q 8, 113; Q 17–18, 247; for the English translation, see Albert the Great, *Man and the Beasts*, trans. J. Scanlan (Binghamton, NY, 1987), 2, 1, 68–9; Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 3-5; and Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 79. For more on reason as the defining feature of humans, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*; Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of the Summa Theologica of St. Aquinas: Pars Prima*, ed Beradus Bonjoannes (London: Thomas Baker, 1906), esp. 1-2, 13.2; and Peter G. Sobol, "The Shadow of Reason: Explanations of Intelligent Animal Behavior in the Thirteenth Century," in *The Medieval World of Nature: A Book of Essays*, ed. Joyce Salisbury (New York: Garland, 1993).
[12] Many scholars in this field, such as Margo DeMello, have called for redefinitions of nonhuman animals as "*other*

animals," so as to eliminate an implied bias in assuming humans are not, somehow, animals themselves. See Margo DeMello, *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 15-16, emphasis added. For more on the debate of human and nonhuman animal definitions and their implications, see Cary Wolfe, "Human, All Too Human: 'Animal Studies' and the Humanities," *PMLA* 124, no. 2 (2009); Donna Haraway, "Otherworldly Conversations, Terran Topics, Local Terms," in *Material Feminisms*, eds. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008); and Paul Waldau "Marginalized Humans and Other Animals," in *Animal Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[13] Leslie Kordecki utilizes the phrase "non-human animal" precisely once to emphasize her examination of human and nonhuman representations in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*, and J. N. Lanting and J. van der Plicht use it while analyzing human bone remains to determine radiocarbon dating reliability on a predominantly pescetarian diet. See Leslie Kordecki, "Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*: Animal Discourse, Women, and Subjectivity," *The Chaucer Review* 36, no. 3 (2002): esp. 288, and J. N. Lanting and J. van der Plicht, "Wat hebben Floris V, skelet Swifterbant S2 en visotters gemeen?" *Palaeohistoria: Acta et Communicationes Instituti Bio-Archaeologici universitatis Groninganae* 37-38 (1996): 491-519.

[14] Julia Gerken studies medieval Germanic horse burials as depicting respect for nonhuman animals; Kristopher Poole examines nonhuman animal bone data to investigate human and nonhuman animal relationships in urbanized England; and, most relevant here, Emma Campbell analyzes courtliness and human/nonhuman animal identity in Marie de France's shapeshifter *lais*. See Julia Gerken, "Human-Animal Relationships Reflected in Early Medieval Horse Burials in German," in *Csontvázak a szekrényből: Válogatott tanulmányok a Magyar Archaeozoológusok Visegrádi Találkozóinak anyagából 2002-2009*, eds. László Bartosiewitcz, Erika Gál, and István Kováts, 65-72 (Budapest: Martin Opitz, 2009); Kristopher Poole, "More than Just Meat: Animals in Viking-Age Towns," in *Everyday Life in Viking-Age Tons: Social Approaches to Towns in England and Ireland, c. 800-1100*, ed. D.M. Hadley (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013); Emma Campbell, "Political Animals: Human/Animal Life in *Bisclavret* and *Yonec*," *Exemplaria* 25, no. 2 (2013): 95-109.

[15] As a starting point on analyses of animals in medieval studies, see Karl Steel, "How to Make a Human," *Exemplaria* 20, no. 1 (2008): 4; Bruce Holsinger, "Of Pigs and Parchment: Medieval Studies and the Coming of the Animal," *PMLA* 124, no. 2 (2009): 619; Salisbury, *The Beast Within*; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Jody Enders, "Homicidal Pigs and the Antisemitic Imagination," *Exemplaria* 14 (2002): 201-238; Peter Dinzelbacher, "Animal Trials: A Multidisciplinary Approach," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 33 (2002): 405-421.

[16] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 30.12; Steel, "How to Make a Human," 7; Holsinger, "Of Pigs and Parchment," 619-622.

[17] I continue to use these constructions in the ensuing chapters, unless the term 'animal' is not employed in juxtaposition to the human, such as when referring to a horse as being animal without the implied opposition of humans-as-non-animals, or when referring to the 'rational animal,' as I argue the latter phrase need not presume a human or nonhuman descriptive in the romances analyzed in this dissertation. In these cases, I drop the modifier 'nonhuman' as redundant.

[18] Saints were often "barometers of cultural values," as Joyce Salisbury observes, and so we can assume with some confidence that these saints' lives reflected their contemporary cultural conceptions of species definitions. See Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, esp. 149, 150-152. We also see the stirrings of an investigation into human definitions in twelfth-century Breton lays: Marie de France's *Bisclavret* and *Yonec* interrogate the medieval definition of the human and, as Emma Campbell argues, leave open the definition of human to the judgment of the audience. While Campbell focuses on the political stakes of such interpretive definitions, her reading nonetheless implies a participation in the ambiguity of human and nonhuman animal definitions. See Campbell, "Political Animals," 107.

[19] *Bevis of Hampton* originated in a lost Middle English text descended from the Anglo-Norman *Boeuve de Haumton*, rendering the surviving versions somewhat removed from their French predecessor. *William of Palerne*, meanwhile, has only one extant: a 12th-century French verse in Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 6565 (fols. 77-157). Even the earlier, brief example of *Ywain and Gawain* reflects this cultural transition, as it follows from Chrétien de Troyes's the twelfth-century *Le Chevalier au Lion* (*The Knight with the Lion*). However, there remains only one extant version of the fourteenth-century, Middle English romance *Ywain and Gawain*: British Library Cotton Galba E. ix. (fols. 4-25). For more on these romance's French and Anglo-Norman origins, see Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjevic, introduction to *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*, eds. Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjevic (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008); Walter Skeat, preface to *The Romance of William of Palerne*, ed. Walter Skeat (1867; London:

Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1890); G. H. V. Bunt, introduction to *William of Palerne: An Alliterative Romance*, ed. G. H. V. Bunt (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis bv, 1985); Albert B. Friedman and Norman T. Harrington's introduction to *Ywain and Gawain*, edited by Albert B. Friedman and Norman T. Harrington, Early English Text Society 254 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), esp. xvii; and Mary Flowers Braswell, introduction to *Ywain and Gawain*, in *Sir Perceval of Galles and Ywain and Gawain*, ed. Mary Flowers Braswell (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), esp. 80-82.

[20] Alan Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 196; Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: The Fourteenth-Century Political Community* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 18; and Ronald Butt, *A History of Parliament: The Middle Ages* (London: Constable, 1989), 253.

[21] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), esp. 144; and Maurice Keen, "Heraldry and Hierarchy: Esquires and Gentlemen," in *Orders and Hierarchies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, ed. Jeffrey Denton (London: Macmillan, 1999), esp, 96, 99-100.

[22] For more on the features of the romantic mode, magical and otherwise, see Fredric Jameson, "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," *New Literary History* 7, no. 1 (1975): 135-163; John Finlayson, "The Marvellous in Middle English Romance," *The Chaucer Review* 33, no. 4 (1999): 363-408; and Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), esp. 4.

[23] *Bevis of Hampton* survives in seven manuscripts, though editors consider the Auchinleck MS, fols. 176-201 (circa 1330) to be the best and most complete version of the romance. Accordingly, my project focuses on the Auchinleck version of the romance for its analysis. For more on the material contexts of *Bevis of Hampton*, see the introduction to *Bevis of Hampton*, in *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, eds. Graham Drake, Eve Salisbury, and Ronald B. Herzman (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 187ff; and Fellows and Djordjevic, introduction to *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*.

[24] For more on Deleuze and Guattari's theories regarding affect and 'becoming,' see their text *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone, 1988).

[25] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* survives in the unique London, British Library MS Cotton Nero A.x (fols. 91r-124v) of the later fourteenth century. For more on the material contexts of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, see the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's *The Cotton Nero A.x Project*; and Andrew and Waldron, introduction to *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*.

[26] "The Most Dangerous Game" is a reference to Richard Connell's short story, also published as "The Hounds of Zaroff"; in it, one General Zaroff has become dissatisfied with hunting more ordinary game and seeks the thrill of "'a quarry with which I can match my wits'"; see Richard Connell, "The Hounds of Zaroff," *Colliers Magazine*, January 19, 1924.

[27] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 17, 101, 107.

[28] *William of Palerne* is found uniquely in Middle English in the mid-fourteenth-century King's College Library, Cambridge MS 13 (fols. 4-86). For more on the material contexts of *William of Palerne*, see Skeat, preface to *The Romance of William of Palerne*; and Bunt, introduction to *William of Palerne*.

[29] Geraldine Heng identifies the "healing and aggressive properties" of jokes as a romantic tool that can "make the transgression of taboos acceptable, narratable." See Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 65, 74.

[30] Waldau "Marginalized Humans and Other Animals," esp. 260ff.

[31] Transhumanists seek to free themselves from human limitations through mechanical, technological, and/or biological means. See M. J. McNamee and S. D. Edwards, "Transhumanism, Medical Technology and Slippery Slopes," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 32, no. 9 (2006): 513-518.

Chapter 1. Horsing Around with Knights: Equine Rationality, Affective Reciprocation, and Becoming-Hero in *Bevis of Hampton*

> KIRK: Spock, what do you make of that?
> SPOCK: Most unusual. An unknown form of energy of great power and intelligence, evidently unaware that its transmissions are disruptive. I find it illogical that its intentions should be hostile.
> McCOY: Really? You think this is its way of saying 'Hi there' to the people of the Earth?
> SPOCK: There are other forms of intelligence on Earth, Doctor. Only human arrogance would assume the message must be meant for man.
>
> - *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*[1]

"And Beues rod on Arondel, / Þat was a stede gode and lel" (589-590)[2]: Bevis rode on Arondel, that was a good and loyal steed. In the fourteenth-century romance *Bevis of Hampton*, the term "lel," meaning 'loyal, true, faithful,' appears only three times (590, 2033, 4448).[3] All of these instances refer exclusively to titular knight Bevis's horse, Arondel. Arondel is not the only named or capable warhorse in the romance, yet only he earns the designation of *lel*. While there is no doubt that Arondel is a well-trained destrier, this appellation indicates that Arondel is something more than a regular warhorse.

Horses were very important to medieval knights, as symbols of their chivalric identity, signifiers of wealth and status, and practical mechanisms of warfare — after all, the term *chivalry* or *chevalerie* itself originates in the Latin term *caballārius*, meaning 'rider, horseman.'[4] Of special importance to knights, destriers were expensive war-horses

bred for combat: large, heavy horses with specific training, capable of great bursts of speed, and aggressive enough to bite and kick at enemies in battle. Knights rarely rode their warhorses for common transit, saving the steed for battle. Instead, they rode coursers: a lighter breed, less carefully trained than the warhorse but still rather aggressive, coursers were useful for regular transportation between battles.[5] However, horses were more than mere vehicles to carry a knight through a melee: horses were essential in the chivalric unit and functioned as an irreplaceable member of the knightly unit in a warrior partnership. Horses also served as knights' companions, as Arondel does in *Bevis of Hampton*.[6]

This Middle English romance follows the adventures of the titular Bevis as he seeks vengeance against his mother and stepfather. Along the way, he wins the admiration of King Ermin and the love of King Ermin's daughter Josian, who bestows upon him his faithful companion Arondel. However, a jealous king named Brademond orchestrates Bevis's downfall, and King Ermin orders Bevis to leave Arondel behind and travel to Brademond, who imprisons him. Meanwhile, King Ermin marries Josian to King Yvor of Mombraunt and grants him Arondel as a groom-gift, but when Arondel nearly kills King Yvor, Yvor chains the horse in the stables. When Bevis finally escapes his own prison years later, he seeks out Arondel and Josian, and they flee Mombraunt pursued by a giant, Ascopard, whom they eventually convince to join them. After a few more misadventures, Bevis finally wins back his earldom, only to be exiled when Arondel kills the English King Edgar's son. King Yvor kidnaps Josian and, later, Arondel, whereupon Bevis finally defeats him and is crowned king of Mombraunt in his place. Several chivalric deeds later, after restoring Hampton for a second time, Bevis and Josian retire to Mombraunt, where

they live happily and die together in an embrace. Through all these feats and misadventures, only Arondel is "lel" to Bevis and no one else, human or other animal,[7] earns that title.

To better explore the implications of the exclusivity of this loyalty, we turn to contemporary definitions of the human and nonhuman animal. In medieval thought, human and nonhuman animals resided in a hierarchy called the Great Chain of Being. Humans, as Thomas Aquinas notes, were defined by their capacity for reason and their possession of a divine soul that ensured resurrection into heaven.[8] Nonhuman animals, on the other hand, possessed neither reason nor soul, and so had no intrinsic value of their own: nonhuman animals were only valuable for their instrumental use to humanity.[9] In place of rationality, instinct governed nonhuman animal behaviors, but this instinct was itself a simple process, akin to "the action of inanimate object."[10] However, *Bevis of Hampton*'s portrayal of the horse Arondel works to undermine the distinction made by Aquinas: Arondel behaves *rationally* and not only by instinct. Still, while Arondel is intelligent, his intelligence does not supersede or replace his animality. The two are not mutually exclusive in this text, and to label Arondel's intelligence as merely replicating human cogitation is to fall victim to human exceptionalism and perpetuate the definition of human as *the* "rational animal."

In this chapter, I explore how the concept of the rational animal in *Bevis of Hampton* resists the limitation of rationality to humanity alone — the romance, in fact, insists on deconstructing a definition in which only humans are rational animals.

Instead, the text presents Arondel as a rational horse, one who forms a powerful affective bond with his companionate knight, Bevis. Affect, as defined by Gilles Deleuze

and Félix Guattari, is not emotion but the "becoming" or "passage from one experiential state of the body to another."[11] Research in neurobiology and neuropsychology has connected affect and cogitation, as Karen Simecek suggests: the two functions operate "in tandem, responding to and shaping one another."[12] These connected functions can extend to what cognitive scientists have called "shared emotions": an intersubjective phenomenon, shared emotions occur when two or more people in similar affective states focus on the same cause of their emotional response while aware of the other's matching response.[13] Yet shared emotions need not occur between two flesh-and-blood people: literature can depict the pain or trauma of fictional characters in such ways that not only recreate but also deepen the experience of shared emotions through readers' affective responses.[14] A reader, as a witness, can share the emotions of a fictional figure. Deleuze and Guattari also suggest, as Laura Cull elaborates, that encountering another's suffering, even nonhuman suffering, shifts the witness into a similar affective state of becoming.[15] Shared emotions and affective reciprocation, then, encompasses both human and nonhuman consciousness(es) and both living and literary figures. And despite its grounding in modern scientific research, affect theory can apply — and has been applied — to medieval studies.[16] In this chapter, I use affect theory as a lens to articulate the implications of Arondel's portrayal as a rational being and his affective relationship with Bevis and the text's insistence on their reciprocal partnership.

The extensive training both a knight and his horse endured undoubtedly helped to create a strong bond between them, and for a knight, there was no nonhuman animal more important than his horse. However, to properly handle their strong and highly aggressive

stallions, as Maud Burnett McInerney notes, knights needed to master a "complex set of competencies and communications."[17] A knight communicated with his steed through voice, but his primary methods utilized touch and equipment, such as the bridle and spurs.[18] Destriers in particular received specialized training, from acclimation to the weight and sounds of their knights' and their own armor to running straight ahead without shying away from enemies. Trainers carefully selected horses for both temperament and aggression to facilitate the needs of a knight. Muslim treatises, such as Abou Bekr's *Le Naceri*, comment on European training techniques and, primarily, the lack of skill therein. Arab horses, smarter and lighter than most Western breeds, required more deliberate, considered handling, and after the twelfth-century Crusades, Western knights were exposed to these alternate training methods which worked better with the new Arabian breeds they encountered.[19]

Considering the cross-cultural contact instantiated by the Crusades, we should examine the "long-standing" training traditions outlined by Abou Bekr. For example, trainers conditioned a horse not to toss its head back or tuck it to its chest, as both stances posed a danger to the rider: a tossed head could land a blow to the rider's face, incapacitating him, while a tucked-in jaw pulls the bridle and makes the horse nearly impossible to control. Instead, the horse must be "responsive" to its rider and, when the rider is disadvantaged, react immediately to assist him in recovering his balance and not throw him off. A warhorse needed also to wait to be mounted and stand still even in combat until its rider had regained the saddle. To better achieve this responsive relationship, Abou Bekr emphasizes the importance of knights' involvement in their own horse's training and

even states that one who "did not personally train his charger [...] courted death."[20] The careful, and likely personal, training a warhorse received would have greatly contributed to the development of a companionate bond between knight and mount. Even without such personal training, however, a knight must rely on his steed, and a horse must equally rely on the knight. Such interdependence was literally trained into both parties.

And while Arondel is a proper warhorse, we can also see him exhibiting qualities that seem to elevate him above the standard destrier. Moreover, the text renders Arondel's behavior not as exceptional for his species but as expected of a horse like him. Arondel's rationality enables him to reciprocate an affective bond with Bevis, but in portraying that bond, the romance also sets Arondel as a mirror to Bevis. In reflecting the titular hero, Arondel imitates his heroic endeavors and, as a consequence, enters into his own state of 'becoming.'

Rational Behavior and Chivalric Companionship

Despite his intriguing characterization, Arondel is not frequently the main subject of scholarly scrutiny. One of the most thorough of scholars to focus on Arondel, Susan Crane examines the interrelationship of horse and knight as a love-bond built through a knight's intensive training. She insists on Arondel's animality, but her reading of Arondel's affective response to Bevis neglects the horse's *rational* response. While Arondel is an affective figure, reciprocating an emotional bond with Bevis, I argue that the very ability to recognize and return the knight's investment lends Arondel some level of rational capacity. The romance draws attention to both aspects of Arondel's nature, the animal and

the rational, and presents them not as a contradiction but as a matter of fact: Arondel behaves both as an animal and as a rational creature. Part of Crane's focus on Arondel's animality rests in her resistance to an anthropomorphic reading of the horse. Instead, she asserts that to categorize his traits — his loyalty, love, and intelligence — as anthropomorphized and, by extension, as "exclusively human capacities" neglects Arondel's "equine consciousness."[21] While dismissing Arondel as anthropomorphized does injustice to his charming animal character, Crane's focus on 'animalizing' his intelligence likewise dismisses a vital aspect of Arondel's personality — his capacity for reason. The implicit definition of intelligence as "exclusively human" falls apart in *Bevis of Hampton*, as the text frequently highlights Arondel's rational capacities and undermines rationality as a defining feature of the human animal.

We should pause to note that *Bevis of Hampton*'s contemporary, *Boeve de Haumtone*,[22] similarly presents the Anglo-Norman Arundel as a proper warhorse, complete with glimpses of the animal's rational behaviors.[23] However, *Boeve de Haumtone* focuses more on horses in general as chivalric accessories than its Middle English sister text: when the former text references a horse, it most typically does so in relation to pricking or spurring, an action that serves to emphasize the knightliness of the riders. The poem does not allow the audience to forget that the horse (and the spurs utilized) are *knightly* signifiers: the horse serves as a sign of rank more than as a fellow warrior. Beyond Arundel, the Anglo-Norman text most closely approaches the concept of horses as trusted or intelligent partners in the occasional moments wherein a knight "let coure" his steed, which Judith Weiss translates as "gives free rein."[24] While hardly a declarative endorsement of

nonhuman animal rationality, this implication of trust in the horse, and in its training, at least implies some level of intelligence in the horse to be taken for granted. Yet overwhelmingly, the Anglo-Norman romance's equine references focus on the speed or appearance of the horse: the text describes steeds as "chivals kernu" ['long-maned horses'] multiple times throughout the text, highlighting physical attributes over intelligence.[25] *Boeve de Haumtone* values Arundel more for the hereditary traits he can pass on to his offspring than for his companionate value, for instance focusing attention on "le fiz Arundel el bruant" (3477) ["the son of the mettlesome Arundel" (89)]. While the text describes Arundel as "el bruant" ['burning or blustery'],[26] the focus here remains on lineage: Arundel's mettle is only valued as a trait that has been passed to his colt. Through much of *Boeve de Haumtone*, the text circumscribes Arundel's qualities to his chivalric value or his usefulness in serving Boeve. The text thus keeps the focus trained on a horse's function: horses were incredibly expensive to obtain and maintain, and so gesturing at the physical aspects of a steed (in particular qualities that were evaluated during the purchasing process) pushes the horse into the realm of treasured object, not treasured companion.

In contrast, the Middle English romance displays Arondel's rationality throughout *Bevis of Hampton* and foregrounds it early in the romance when Bevis rides Arondel into battle: "He smot Arondel wiþ spures of golde; / Þanne þouȝte þat hors, þat he scholde, / Aȝen Redefoun Beves gan ride / And smot him þurȝ out boþe side" (1000-1002). Here, the line "Þanne þouȝte þat hors, þat he scholde" (then thought that horse, that he should) leaves its primary subject to be filled by context — presumably Bevis, who spurred his steed and struck Redefoun through both his sides in the preceding and following lines,

respectively. And yet the ambiguity of subject and direct object — "þat hors" (1000) or "Beves" (1001) — creates a space of play in the text to reimagine who commands whom and by how much, play that does not appear in *Boeve de Haumtone* (2564-2566). The text leaves the line in question tantalizingly open, such that one can imagine Arondel's responding to Bevis with a level of rational consideration: urged forward, Arondel reasons that he ought to carry Bevis *toward Redefoun*, modifying a general command ("go") to a specific target ("Redefoun"). Deconstructing the connotations of "þouȝte" only furthers this reading: the verb means 'to exercise the faculty of reason,' specifically in such ways as 'to form an opinion, come to a conclusion' or even 'to form a purpose, have an intention.'[27] Arondel's "þouȝte" brings with it rational connotations of careful consideration and choice. The absence of punctuation in the manuscript grants quite a lot of freedom of interpretation here as well, particularly as the text is written on the manuscript in two columns of rhyming-couplet verse, rendering this line visually independent from those above and below. Therefore, the page bears a visual pause after "spures of golde" that potentially leaves "Þanne þouȝte þat hors þat he scholde" as its own clause, even as the rhyme scheme metrically connects it to the previous line.

While contemporary treatises on horse training highlight the chivalric unit's mutual response toward a goal, they often do so in a one-sided fashion: the horse reacts "without understanding" even while the steed and knight enter a sort of symbiotic unity.[28] Yet *Bevis of Hampton* seems to resist disregarding Arondel's responses to Bevis as mere reactions. Instead, the text paints the steed as behaving and thinking rationally. Even if one hesitates to read the line I discuss above as depicting Arondel's agency to choose, the text at the

very least shows the horse as *consenting* to Bevis's decision: the knight urges him forward and "þouȝte þat hors þat he scholde" charge ahead, as the horse considers and agrees with his human partner. In either reading, Arondel accepts Bevis's orders: spurred onward, he considers the command and either *agrees* to or *decides* that he should go forward against Redefoun. This response can be read as part of Arondel's affective bond with Bevis — both understand each other's affective states in battle and keep their focus on the same object, in this case Redefoun. Their bond is reciprocative and symbiotic as both rely on and share affect with each other to work as a single unit.

However, Arondel does not rely on Bevis or their bond for his ability to think, as even when separated from Bevis, Arondel exhibits traits of rationality. When King Ermin betrays Bevis and marries Josian to King Yvor, Ermin offers Arondel to Yvor as a groom-gift. But when Yvor attempts to ride Arondel, the horse will have none of it: the moment Yvor mounts Arondel, "Þat hors wel sone vnder-ȝit / Þat Beues nas nouȝt vpon is rigge" (1514-1515), or that horse soon well understood that Bevis was not upon his back. The text specifically gives Arondel the capacity to identify a strange rider and 'comprehend' that this man is not Bevis, or even 'understand the purport (of a threat)' in Yvor's mounting him.[29] Only once does Arondel passively allow another rider to mount him, when a Saracen thief uses magic to ensorcell the horse.[30] But with Yvor, Arondel reacts quite strongly: the steed immediately takes Yvor on a long, violent ride across the country before he throws him off and nearly kills him. The text even playfully puns that Arondel nearly "al to-brak þe kinges kroun" (1522) or broke to pieces the king's crown — meaning both the crown of his skull and, with his death, the crown symbolic of his rule over his kingdom. Many

scholars, like Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, read this sequence as illustrative of Arondel's loyalty to Bevis, and that is true: Arondel's behaves as expected of a chivalric companion.[31] Nonetheless, the phrasing employed, that he "vnder-ʒit," plays an important role in Arondel's portrayal. The text embeds underpinnings of rational thought in Arondel's behavior even while he reacts as a loyal steed of romance would in the absence of his human companion.

After Arondel throws him, Yvor must chain him up in the stable in a rather elaborate array of restraints (1525-1534), but even those measures eventually prove insufficient. When Bevis reunites with Arondel, the horse breaks his bonds to rejoin his knightly partner:

> Whan þat hors herde neuene
> His kende lordes steuene,
> His rakenteis he al te-rof
> And wente in to þe kourt wel kof
> And neide & made miche pride
> Wiþ gret ioie be ech a side. (2157-2162)

Arondel hears Bevis speaking — or perhaps hears his name, as we will consider shortly — and tears off all his restraints, leaping into the court with neighs and prancing all around with great joy. What I want to focus on here is how Arondel recognizes Bevis — specifically when the horse "herde neuene / His kende lordes steuene" (2157-2158). Most scholars focus on "steuene," meaning 'the voice of a human being,' or even 'the sound or tonal pattern characteristic of and distinctive to an individual's voice,' and assert that Arondel merely reacts to the sound of his "kende" or 'legitimate' master's voice.[32] This reading certainly holds validity: Arondel recognizes Bevis's "steuene," and even that

recognition indicates some rational capacity for all that scholars disregard it as merely 'animal.' Yet still, we have more to examine here — one cannot overlook another key word used in this passage: "neuene." We can gloss this word in two ways, depending on which meaning of the verb *nevenen* we utilize. The most common reading of this passage cites the verb's secondary meaning, 'to say.'[33] This reading fits well with the use of "steuene" in the subsequent line, and so editors often gloss the passage as "þat hors herde [*speak*]/His kende lordes [voice]" (2157-2158). However, *nevenen* has a primary definition of 'to mention, [....] speak of, refer to, esp. by name.'[34] Using this definition, the word indicates that Arondel recognizes not so much Bevis's speech as he does Bevis's name. While grammatically tenuous, this gloss gains ground when put into the narrative context, as the last person to speak was not Bevis, but Josian: "Me wolde þenke be his fasoun / Þat hit were Beues of Hamtoun!" (2155-2156), or 'I would think, by his appearance, that it was Bevis of Hampton.' Immediately after Josian refers to Bevis by name, Arondel reacts — "Whan þat hors herde neuene" (2157). Again, the manuscript format plays a visual role in this interpretation: its columns of text break between these lines and place "neuene" on top of the right-hand column and "Beues of Hamtoun" on the bottom of the left-hand, such that the latter acts as a sort of pseudo-catchword to join with and evoke the naming definition of the former. Of course, we could also say that according to the manuscript format, "neuene" and "steuene" share a stronger linking: placed atop each other on the manuscript page and paired in the rhyming scheme, they connect with each other both visually and metrically. Still, the reader encounters the first pairing ("Beues of Hamtoun" and "neuene") before the rhyming pair to follow ("neuene" and "steuene"), and so we may interpret some

primacy in the first connection. In conjunction with the narrative details of this scene — i.e. Josian speaks immediately before Arondel reacts — and the text's overall favoring of Arondel's intelligence, we can read the first meaning of "neuene" as present in the passage, even if grammatically ill-fitted to the line. And so, the audience can understand that Arondel is capable of recognizing not only Bevis's voice, but also his name.

In one of only a few clear examples of Arundel's rational capacities in *Boeve de Haumtone*, the Anglo-Norman text's rendition of this scene only reinforces my interpretation: "Le destrer, kef u fet a deuz cheynis lier, / kant hoy Boun de Hampton nomer,/solum son sen grant joie en ad al qer" (1440-1442) ["When the horse, which was bound by two chains, heard the name of Boeve of Hampton, his heart was filled with joy from what he understood" (53)]. Here, the horse explicitly recognizes Boeve's "nomer" ['name'], a term exclusively defined as naming, through Arundel's "sen" (meaning 'knowledge' or 'sense' as well as 'thoughts, mind').[35] When Arundel celebrates wildly and a bit destructively (1443-1444), Josian confirms that his response stems from hearing Boeve's name: "'ore oyez, sire palmer, / come grant fereté demeyne le desrer, / pur ceo ke il oyt Boun une fez nomer" (1445-1447) ["'Now, sir palmer, you can hear how excited the horse becomes as soon as he once hears Boeve named'" (53)]). In this scene, both the text and the characters acknowledge Arundel's ability to recognize Boeve's *name* and so draw attention to the horse's understanding.

In response to identifying Bevis, the Middle English Arondel tears off his chains and speeds into the courtyard to meet him, where the horse also "neide & made miche pride / Wiþ gret ioie" (2161-2162) or neighed and made a big show of pride/spirit, with great

joy. The steed's response seems nothing short of a celebration — even the word "pride," in addition to its meaning of 'prideful display, ostentation,' also contains here the specific meaning 'of a horse: to show spirit.'[36] Arondel puts on quite a spirited display in his joyful reunion with Bevis. But then, when Bevis approaches Arondel, "þe hors him knew and seȝ" (2176), the horse saw and knew him. The Middle English text further emphasizes Arondel's understanding in this scene with Josian's interjection: while Arondel celebrates his reunion with Bevis in the courtyard, the maid interrupts to lament that "'Wel mani a man is bane / To dai he worþ i-lauȝt, / Er þan þis stede ben icauȝt!'" (2164-2166) — many a man is doomed to be laughed at/struck today before this steed is caught. While some editors gloss "i-lauȝt" as 'to be laughed at,'[37] the word's structure appears more commonly as the verb *lacchen*, meaning 'to be seized, struck, or taken,' than it does the former verb *laughen*, 'to laugh.'[38] The narrative context, as well, better matches the *lacchen* meaning than the *laughen* one, as Josian perceives Arondel's escape to be a disaster, crying "Allas!" (2163): without Bevis to tame him, Josian anticipates that many men will attempt and fail to recapture the steed, and in doing so, they will be struck or violently seized, like in Yvor's near-fatal encounter with Arondel. The text here reminds the reader of that past attempt to ride the horse and Arondel's immediate understanding of and ensuing violent retribution toward the strange rider. And yet this wild, nigh-uncatchable horse stays perfectly still while Bevis mounts him: "Hit ne wawede no fot, / Til Beues hadde þe stirop" (2177-2178), or he moved no foot until Bevis had the stirrup. The narrative juxtaposes Josian's reaction with Arondel's happiness and then sudden docility toward Bevis, as if to further emphasize the horse's understanding of the situation: recognizing Bevis, Arondel performs as he was

trained to and remains perfectly still for his rider to mount. While Josian does not yet realize she stands beside Bevis, Arondel does recognize the knight, by voice, name, and sight, in a moment of animal rational understanding. Crane extols this scene as representative of Arondel and Bevis's affective bond, as the text animates Arondel in ways that elevate him above chivalric equipment.[39] This scene also renders Arondel not as anthropomorphized or human-like per se, but rather as a chivalric horse with reasoning: in conjunction with other moments of his intelligence, Arondel's recognition of Bevis on a cognitive level intertwines with his equine training and nature to suggest his capacities as a rational animal.

Of course, we know nonhuman animals are capable of recognizing and responding to names, and anyone who has ever owned a pet can attest to its personality and decision-making capabilities, whether it be a clever, escape-artist dog opening a door on his own or a cat willfully knocking a glass off the table while maintaining eye-contact. Ravens are notorious in scientific communities for not only solving complex puzzles with simple tools but also holding grudges and recognizing human faces.[40] Horses in particular are incredibly intelligent and, as one Norwegian study shows, can be taught to communicate their personal comfort preferences via visuals symbols.[41] However, the point here is that the fourteenth-century *Bevis of Hampton* acknowledges and even celebrates the horse as an intelligent creature independently of anthropomorphic attributions. Arondel displays rational behavior and cogitation *as* a nonhuman animal.

Arondel's rationality plays an integral part in his affective bond with Bevis. To demonstrate the features of Arondel and Bevis's bond, we will examine the poem's horse-race sequence. Racing horses for wealthy prizes was a common medieval practice, though

it rarely occurs in romances. The text's inclusion of this scene, then, is unusual in the genre. While some editors dismiss the sequence as a variation on the trope of demonstrating a horse's physical prowess,[42] such dismissal ignores a secondary function: not only does horse racing showcase Arondel's equine abilities, but it also depicts the rational aspects of his affective bond with Bevis.

The text, as many medieval romances tend to do, first assures the reader before the action begins that this undertaking will end favorably: "þar wiþ was Beues paied wel" (3519), or therewith Bevis was well pleased. Arondel is a high-quality steed, and the text does not allow its audience to doubt his abilities for a moment. Nor does Bevis himself betray any second thoughts: "Meche a treste to Arondel" (3520), he had much confidence/trust in Arondel. The two lines, tied as they are by the rhyme scheme as well as their sequential order, almost read as causal: Bevis is well pleased in this pursuit *because* he trusts Arondel so much. Both the EETS and the TEAMS editions of *Bevis of Hampton* include a colon punctuation that furthers this causal relationship — "þar wiþ was Beues paied wel: / Meche a treste to Arondel" (3519-20). This consistent editorial decision seems to imply that audiences *want* to interpret the line as causally connected. The syntactic structure also implies a correlation: when the verb *trusten* takes the preposition "to," as it does in the above line, it carries the connotations of not only having confidence in the direct object (here, Arondel) but also relying on it 'for guidance, support, discretion' as well as 'entrust[ing] one's safety or well-being' to it.[43] Bevis's confidence in Arondel exceeds the horse's physical prowess and encompasses a reliance on the horse's more companionate support: Bevis trusts that Arondel will succeed here, and also that the horse will serve his

interests in and outside of battle. The connotations of relying on one's 'guidance, support, discretion' implies a more mental or social trust than a purely physical one and suggests that Bevis trusts Arondel not only with his physical safety but also his general well-being. In fact, the prepositional construction "treste to" displaces agency from Bevis to Arondel: Bevis entrusts the matter *to* Arondel, implying that the horse has become the primary actor here. If one reads the lines as causal, then one can read Bevis's pleasure as a consequence of trusting Arondel to control the endeavor. The success of the race, then, is a result of their intimate, mutually affective bond and Arondel's rational agency therein.

However, Arondel does not easily win the race. During the event, two knights attempt to cheat in the competition and manage to gain a lead. To beat them Bevis encourages Arondel to run all the faster by promising the horse that he will erect a castel for him if they win: "'Arondel [...] / For me loue go bet, go, / And I schel do faire and wel / For þe loue reren a castel!'" (3531-3534), or 'Arondel, I bid you for my love go, go, and I shall fairly and well build a castle for your love.' The Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone* does not include this promise (2491-2493), but the Middle English Bevis seems to possess a different, more intimate bond with his Arondel. And the incentive works:

> Whan Arondel herde, what he spak,
> Before þe twei kniȝtes he rak,
> Þat he com raþer to þe tresore,
> Þan hii be half and more (3535-3538).

Arondel hears Bevis's words and "rak" (3536) or 'hastened' in front of the two knights so that he came to the treasure sooner than them by "half and more" (3538). But Arondel responds to Bevis's orders as much as to his encouragement: as a highly-trained warhorse,

Arondel would recognize his rider's cues. Indeed, Crane observes how this interaction highlights the level of nontraditional communication cultivated by the intensive training that produces a medieval knight: she asserts that Bevis transmits his desires to Arondel through the knight's body language more than his words, using physical signals that alert the horse to his rider's desires.[44] Crane ties this communication, which "surpasses the aids of spur, rein, and the verbal signal 'go,'" to Arondel and Bevis's (admittedly asymmetrical) interrelationship embedded in a love-bond.[45] This reading, though, assumes that the saddle employed in the race is not the high saddle favored in the medieval era. These early European saddles were raised, with progressively higher cantles and pommels to bear the increasing weight of lances through the medieval period. Even the simpler leisure saddles, such as for riding — or perhaps, as here, racing — typically still utilized the solid-tree construction which raised it off the horse's back such that "no muscle or back movement of the horse could have been felt."[46] While the horse likely still felt shifts in weight on his back or perhaps a change of knee-pressure, much of the body language Crane implies would be as insensate for the horse as the horse's musculature movement would be to his rider.[47] Bevis's voice, then, acts as his primary mode of communication here.

Considering Crane's justified resistance to anthropomorphizing Arondel, she expresses reluctance to deem this particular scene as bestowing a "human" intelligence onto Arondel so as to not shut out his equine animalness. However, "human" intelligence as it has been classified is precisely the point at issue here. While Arondel's intensive training as a warhorse constitutes an important part of his character, as Crane argues, it does not automatically exclude his rational portrayal in the romance. The text itself

practically insists on two possible readings: Bevis urges the steed forward with a simple command of "'go bet, go,"' but the text immediately follows the command with an incentive, one that it then emphasizes in the horse's response. Arondel hears and, the audience presumes, understands Bevis's encouragement: "Whan Arondel herde, *what he spak*" (3535), he launches forward and gains a substantial lead, winning the competition by a large margin. The text presents Arondel as not merely responding to a recognizable command ("'go bet, go"') but also to Bevis's subsequent promise. The text highlights not how or that Bevis speaks to Arondel, but *what* he speaks. Thus rises the implication of Arondel's comprehension, that the horse possesses some level of understanding that spurs him onward as surely as Bevis's commands. Arondel acts both as the thoroughly trained warhorse and the agent with comprehension that the romance insists upon, and through this combination, horse and knight constitute an equal partnership. During this race, the two share in affective conditions and in the object of their focus, and they communicate and respond to each other in similar ways. They understand and respond to each other's needs and desires, and their bond here embodies the affective phenomenon of shared emotions.[48]

As part of that equal, affective exchange, Bevis fulfills his promise: "Beves of his palfrai aliȝte / & tok þe tresore anon riȝte: / Wiþ þat and wiþ mor catel / He made þe castel of Arondel" (3539-42) — Bevis dismounts and takes the race's prize, using it and "more catel" or 'more income/goods' to build Castle Arondel. For Arondel, Bevis immediately undertakes the lengthy and costly endeavor of constructing a castle. He does not hesitate and neither does the narrative: Bevis dismounts, accepts the winnings, and then uses them to construct the castle all in the span of several lines. The castle does not benefit Bevis

overmuch: Arondel's victory ensures his prestigious reputation (3543-3544), and Bevis never dwells there, instead settling with Josian in Mombraunt at the romance's end (4410). The poem, in fact, makes no further mention of Castle Arondel beyond its construction, during which the text further notes that Bevis spends more on the project than he wins in the race: "Wiþ þat *and wiþ mor* catel" (3541). The castle does not constitute an even exchange of prize:promise or race:castle but rather an investment made on Arondel's behalf. Bevis does not hesitate to pour his funds into keeping his word to his horse.

By contrast, the Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone* paints Arundel as nothing more than a chivalric accessory. When the two cheating knights gain an impressive four-mile lead in the race (2489-2492) and Arundel overtakes them but fails to pass them for three leagues (2500), Boeve does not encourage his steed with promises or incentives but instead chides him for his poor performance against inferior opponents (2501-2506). Boeve calls him "[c]hival" ['horse'] (2501) and spurs him onward "par maltalent" ['in anger'] (2493).[49] In response, Arundel strives harder than a "cerf" ('slave' or 'serf') before obtaining his victory (2507-2509).[50] Boeve's use of aggression and insults as motivators and Arundel's servile response depict their relationship more as that of master/servant than that of partners. After the race, Boeve builds a castle not for Arundel but for his own patrilineal heritage, naming it for the horse more as an afterthought (2520-2522), and Boeve paints himself as the primary subject, telling others that "ai hui conquis" (2527) ["today I've won" (72)]. Here, Arundel merely "accompanies" the knight during an endeavor.[51] *Boeve de Haumtone* seems more concerned with Arundel's status as a chivalric accessory for Boeve in his identity as a knight. The Middle English version, by contrast,

concerns itself more with the affective bonds between knight and steed: Bevis acts to highlight Arondel's rational capacities, their bond as a chivalric unit and also as an intimate companionship.

A Horse is a Horse: Trenchefis's Rational and Affective Capacities

One may still argue that Arondel is exceptional as a rational horse in *Bevis of Hampton*, and that his affective bond with Bevis anthropomorphizes him. However, Arondel is not the only horse in *Bevis of Hampton* who exhibits both rational capacity and an affective bond with Bevis: a steed called Trenchefis displays similar capabilities. Bevis acquires this horse after he escapes his imprisonment by Brademund and is pursued by a band of knights. In this posse is a knight named Grander, whose backstory is this:

> A king þar was swiþe fer,
> His nam was hote Grander.
> An hors he hadde of gret pris,
> Þat was icleped Trinchefis:
> For him a ȝaf seluer wiȝt,
> Er he þat hors haue miȝt. (1721-1726)

The text introduces Grander in two lines, stating there was a "swiþe fer" (1721) or 'very fierce' king whose name was Grander. After that, Grander's acquisition of Trenchefis dominates the description of his entire background: he had a horse of "gret pris" (1723) or 'great value/worth' named Trenchefis, for whom he gave "seluer wiȝt" (1725), or his weight in silver, before he could have that horse. While not an atypical entrance — romances often make short introductions of enemy knights, and Grander's very brief role in the narrative hardly justifies more — the extended focus on Trenchefis is a bit more

unusual. The text expends twice as many lines discussing Trenchefis as it does Grander. In fact, Grander acts merely as a reference: his character and history are only relevant as a vehicle for Trenchefis to enter the narrative, whose backstory supplants Grander's. It is hardly justifiable, then, to even call this a description of Grander's background — the poem provides Trenchefis with a backstory most narratives give only their human actors. Whereas *Boeve de Haumtone* does not name Trenchefis at all, *Bevis of Hampton* treats the horse like a character all his own.

Nonetheless, *Bevis of Hampton* relies primarily on implication when depicting Trenchefis's rationality. Cornered again in his continued flight from Brademund, Bevis finds himself on "þe cliue, / Þer þe wilde se was" (1790-91), or the cliff where the wild sea was. To avoid capture, Bevis rides into the waters on Trenchefis, who swims "dai and […] niȝt" (1815) over the sea until he "bar ouer þat gentil kniȝt" (1816) or bore that gentle knight over (the sea). When urged to dive off the cliff, Trenchefis does not exhibit the same level of agency that allowed Arondel to exhibit his capacity for decision-making: "Beues smot is hors, þat it lep / In to þe se, þat was wel dep" (1811-12) — Bevis struck his horse so that it leaped into the sea that was very deep. Bevis clearly acts as the leader in this action as he spurs Trenchefis onwards *so that* he leaps into the deep sea.

Yet this maneuver was not part of a medieval warhorse's typical training. The precedent for horse-diving rests in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century popular attractions in which a ridden horse sprinted up a wooden ramp to leap 40 feet into a 12-foot depth of water.[52] Warhorses, on the other hand, were typically trained for combat with a corresponding emphasis on short bursts of speed and explosive charges. It is unlikely that

destriers' typical training included jumping from progressively taller platforms into pools of water to condition them for high aquatic leaps, though both practices taught horses not to throw their head lest they strike their rider's face and incapacitate them.[53] Nevertheless, Trenchefis is surely trained to be responsive to his rider, and so when Bevis urges him to jump into a raging sea, the horse does so. Here again one may overlook the partnership inherent in horse-riding and assume the relationship to be one of master/servant or even user/tool. Yet a horse obeys with its implicit consent: as horse-diver Arnette French comments, "'Once you were on the horse, there really wasn't much to do but hold on. The horse was in charge.'"[54] Not even a magnificently trained destrier would willingly make such a leap as the one Bevis asks of Trenchefis — from "þe cliue" into "þe wilde se," or from the cliff into the wild sea — without some prior conditioning that Trenchefis likely did not possess. Therefore, even in this moment of spur-and-leap, the text still implies that Trenchefis *willingly* takes this precarious jump. While the details of high "cliue" and "wilde se" can be read as dramatizers for the narrative, they also double as emphasis for Trenchefis's implicit consent. Despite these dangers and his instincts, the horse obeys Bevis and launches himself into the waters, swimming for a day and a night to carry his knight to safety. The text, it seems, invites the audience to see the horse as receptive to affective responses and capable of shared emotions.

The poem also portrays Trenchefis as an affective figure, as he recognizes and reciprocates Bevis's need to escape even at the risk of drowning. After the dangerous leap into the sea and Trenchefis's long swim to bear Bevis to safety, the horse climbs out of the water and shakes himself dry:

Whan he com of þat wilde brok,
His gode stede him resede & schok,
And Beues, for honger in þat stounde
Þe hors þrew him doun to grounde. (1817-1820)

When Trenchefis rises out of the "wilde" (1817) or 'wild' waters and "resede & schok" (1818)—both verbs meaning he shook himself dry—he dislodges the hunger-weak Bevis and throws him "doun to grounde" (1820). However, the text emphasizes that it is Bevis's own hunger that causes him to lose his grip on the horse — "*for honger* in þat stounde" (1819, emphasis added), or for hunger in that moment — and not any aggression on the horse's part. We can easily recognize Trenchefis's shake, ostensibly to dislodge the water in his coat, as an automatic, instinctive reaction. The scene is almost comedic in its charm, rendering Trenchefis as distinctly animal, but nonetheless faithful and almost endearing, much like Arondel. Unlike in *Boeve de Haumtone*, wherein Boeve immediately leaps back onto the horse (1268), the Middle English Bevis remains on the ground and laments his current condition with a great "Allas!": "'Whilom ichadde an erl-dam / And an hors gode and snel, / Þat men clepede Arondel'" (1821-24), or 'I formerly had an earldom and a good and bold horse that men called Arondel.' The tumble from his steed reminds Bevis of his beloved Arondel and subsequently reminds the audience of not only Arondel's importance to the knight as a socio-economic and chivalric signifier — as Bevis places the horse and his earldom on the same plane — but also highlights Bevis's emotional investment in the horse. Here, Trenchefis acts as an affective conduit, allowing Bevis to express his great grief and frustration. The horse fills the role of Bevis's companion, an emotional investment *in potentia*, and his role as such underscores Bevis's affective relationship with

Arondel even as it gestures at the possibility for a similar reciprocated bond with Trenchefis.

Nor does that bond stay *in potentia*: Bevis develops a sufficient investment in Trenchefis to mourn the horse's death. Soon after crossing the sea, Bevis encounters a giant and, in the ensuing confrontation, the giant accidentally kills Trenchefis:

> To Sire Beues a smot þer wiþ
> A sterne strok wiþ outen griþ,
> Ac a failede of his diuis
> And in the heued smot Trenchefis,
> Þat ded to grounde fel þe stede.
> 'O,' queþ Beues, 'so god me spede,
> Þow hauest don gret vileinie,
> Whan þow sparde me bodi
> And for me gilt min hors aqueld,
> Þow witest him, þat mai nouȝt weld.' (1885-94)

The giant swings a "sterne stroke" (1886), or severe blow, at Bevis but misses his target and instead hits Trenchefis in the head, who falls "ded to grounde" (1889). Immediately, Bevis stops the battle entirely to lament his loss from such "gret vileinie" (1891) or great wickedness/wrongdoing.[55] While knights certainly aimed to preserve their own horses, they also often targeted their opponents' steeds to gain the upper hand in battle, so Trenchefis's death should not be an unusual or wholly unexpected risk in this fight.[56] The giant even struck Trenchefis by accident and slew the horse without the explicit objective of removing Bevis's martial advantage. Yet despite the accidental nature of the killing blow and the reality of losing horses in battle, Bevis goes so far as to condemn the giant for the deed: he claims the giant "aqueld" or 'killed' the horse for Bevis's own "gilt" or 'offense,' and he states the giant "witest him, þat mai nouȝt weld" (1894), or punished him that could

not control (presumably, his circumstances).[57] Trenchefis, the endearing creature who bore Bevis across the sea, is not merely a broken tool in this scene, but also a lost companion. Crane notes that this passage implies Trenchefis's life "was of value to the horse himself."[58] While medieval thought did not ascribe nonhuman animals with intrinsic value, *Bevis of Hampton* presents this horse as more than defined by his instrumental value.[59] While one may interpret this line from a pragmatic perspective of lamenting a lost advantage, as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen does, such a reading would better fit with the Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone*[60]: immediately after the giant kills his unnamed horse, Boeve continues to fight without pausing to lament (1313-1314), and when he strikes the deathblow upon the giant, he does so not to avenge his horse but because the giant had refused to offer hospitality and so had slighted Boeve's honor (1315). The Middle English *Bevis of Hampton* instead suggests the horse may possess rationality — so that Trenchefis can understand his life sufficiently to value it. The text depicts Trenchefis not as damaged equipment but as a victim: he is an innocent, wrongfully blamed and subsequently murdered.

Bevis's response portrays the horse's death as a grievous crime: his emotional investment in the steed supersedes the martial and economic disadvantages of losing the horse, and so the knight's reaction overflows with affective editorializing. The knight claims that his own "gilt" caused Trenchefis's death and his own 'offense' or 'misdeed' brought the blow.[61] But Bevis latches onto the "gret vileinie" in the giant's action: not only had he killed Trenchefis but he "sparde me bodi" (1893). Bevis renders the horse's death in terms of his own person: sparing Bevis physically necessitated striking the horse, as

though the two constituted an equal exchange. Bevis thus affectively conflates his own body with that of Trenchefis, mapping onto this horse's gruesome demise the ghost of his own potential wounds and death. Trenchefis, by his end, has developed a sufficient affective bond with Bevis that the knight equates their physical wellbeing. Trenchefis is more than a horse to Bevis, much like Arondel, and the text presents both horses as capable of participating in shared emotions and reciprocating affective bonds with their knight. Arondel, then, is not an exception but part of the norm: knights and horses in general, the romance implies, are capable of — and, indeed, benefit from — developing powerful, affective bonds.

Affective Conflation and Becoming-Hero

While Arondel exhibits rationality and a strong affective bond with Bevis, the romance also seems to conflate the human and the equine characters at various points. The text itself depicts the pair as very closely linked and presents them as parallel or reflective figures. As I will show, this conflation creates a version of Deleuze's and Guattari's "becoming-animal." While Deleuze defines affect itself as "becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them (thereby becoming someone else)," he and Guattari define becoming-animal specifically as a shift from stability to anomaly, as a move away from the definable and identifiable to the undefinable and unidentifiable.[62] While becoming-animal may start with some imitation, it entails less repetition or reproduction and more creating the new. That is not to say that becomings-animal have an objective or goal — they do not: becoming produces only itself and "there is nothing outside of

becoming to become."[63] But becomings-animal are not dreams or imaginations, as Deleuze and Guattari clarify: "[w]hat is real is the becoming itself," even in the absence or unreality of what the becomings become, and this reality of becoming-animal persists "even though one does not in reality become animal."[64] The example they offer is that of imitating a dog: if you bark like a dog, you do not transform into a dog. Rather, if you bark "with enough feeling, with necessity and composition," you project a dog.[65] The "gestural relation" of this dog, as Laura Cull observes, creates something new that is neither you nor the dog.[66] You are becoming-dog, but you do not *become*-dog. Nor is there an oppositional binary of imitator and imitated, as the imitator cannot remain unaffected by the imitation: in becoming-dog, you are no longer *you* any more than you are now *dog*. With this framework, I examine key moments in *Bevis of Hampton* wherein the text, Josian, and even Bevis himself conflate Arondel with Bevis. However, this equation of knight and horse renders a textual imitation of Arondel to the titular knight such that Arondel shifts from horse to a state of becoming-hero.

When Arondel nearly kills Yvor, as we saw earlier, Yvor's men "lauȝte him wiþ queinte ginne" (1526) or caught him with a cunning ruse or an 'ingenious device or contrivance.'[67] They must employ an elaborate machination to keep Arondel detained:

> To rakenteis a stod iteide,
> Nas mete ne drinke be-fore him leid,
> Hey ne oten ne water clere,
> Boute be a kord of a solere.
> Noman dorste come him hende,
> Þar þat hors stod in bende. (1529-1534)

They tie Arondel with chains and feed him from "a solere" (1532), or a loft above, all while his captors keep as much distance from him as possible as no one "dorest come him hende" (1533) or dared come close to him. The text repeats how thoroughly they bind Arondel: "To rakenteis a stode iteide / [...] / Þar þat hors stod in bende" (1528-34), or he stood tied in chains...there that horse stood in fetters. As though holding him in his stall is not secure enough an imprisonment, they have tied Arondel in multiple chains — "rakenteis" and "bende" both indicate 'fetters' or 'chains.'[68] Arondel's captors must create a complex detainment structure, including a rope to lower minimal food and water to Arondel, in order to feel assured of his confinement. This episode occurs sandwiched between descriptions of Bevis's own imprisonment. Nearly 100 lines earlier, the text relates Bevis's capture by Brademund, wherein Brademund's men bind Bevis to "a ston gret" (1423), or a large stone, and leave him at a "petes grounde" (1431), or at the bottom of a pit, that was "twenti teise" deep (1426), or twenty fathoms deep, and filled with "wormes" (1430), or snakes, one of which bites him and scars his face badly. The text lingers on Bevis's "meche miseise" (1418), or his mental and physical pain/distress.[69] As with Arondel, Bevis's jailers confine him to an excessive degree, with minimal food and water (1419-1422). When the text circles back to Bevis (a scant 34 lines after it relates Arondel's confinement), it reiterates the shared straits of the two captives: "[...] hadde Beues lein in bendes / Seue ȝer in peines grete, / Lite idronke and lasse iete" (1568-1570), or Bevis had lain seven years in bondage/chains in great pain with little to drink and less to eat. The text self-consciously returns to these descriptions of "rakenteie" (1529, 1636, 2159), "bendes" (1534, 1568), and minimal food lowered from above (1529-1534, 1598-1600, 1638, 1644). The text thus self-

consciously and repeatedly redeploys similar terminology when describing both imprisonments and creates mirror scenarios of detainment. The manuscript itself presents the ordeals of the two captives, human and equine, on facing pages: Arondel's capture occurs on folio 184 verso (column a), while Bevis suffers his imprisonment on folio 185 recto (columns a-b).[70] The very layout of the manuscript exhibits the imprisonments as two sides of the same ordeal, as the leaves in the manuscript exemplify a side-by-side mirror image of each episode. The narrative elements and the manuscript's physical presentation of the passages only serve to unite Arondel and Bevis textually and materially.

The romance's investment in this partnership of dual-heroes breaks the text's own narrative continuity. Near the start of the romance, when fifteen-year-old Bevis rides into his "ferste bataile" (585), or his first battle, he does so astride Arondel: "Beves rod on Arondel, / That was a stede gode and lel" (589-590), or Bevis rode on Arondel that was a good and loyal steed. And yet Josian does not bestow Arondel upon Bevis until over 400 lines later, when she formally knights and rewards him for his valor and service in the fight:

> After that she yaf him a stede,
> That swithe gode was at nede,
> For hit was swift and ernede wel.
> Me clepede hit Arondel. (985-988)

After the battle, Josian gives him a steed that was both "swithe gode [...] at nede" (986), or very excellent as needed, and "swift and ernede wel" (987), or swift and ran well, named Arondel. While Bevis's riding Arondel into battle before the text has even introduced the "stede gode and lel" may be attributed to scribal error, I resist dismissing this detail upon those grounds. This battle occurs before Bevis has been knighted: he performs great feats,

carrying his sword Morgelay and riding Arondel — the sword and spurs that mark him as a knight before their ritual donning later in the knighting ceremony.[71] As if to emphasize these chivalric signifiers as such, almost immediately after Josian formally bestows Arondel upon Bevis, the knight leaps upon his destrier to ride once more into battle (989) and the poem notes that "[h]e smot Arondel with *spures of golde*" (999, emphasis added), or he struck Arondel with golden spurs. The text draws attention to the earlier presence of the sword and horse and also the lack of official chivalric equipment that it here emphasizes, indicating that this may not be a scribal error. Within the world of the narrative, the romance so strongly associates Arondel with Bevis that even before his knighting, Bevis cannot engage in his chivalric endeavors without Arondel to bear him through them. And nor can Arondel be absent from the knight's first battle, as they are not only an affective unit but Arondel himself also inhabits the state of becoming-hero. While he is not become-hero, the horse nonetheless appears outside his reflective imitation of Bevis-as-hero.

Even Josian, Bevis's lady-love, equates the knight with the horse. After his long captivity and escape, Bevis learns that Josian and Arondel reside at Mombraunt, where his love has married Yvor and assists the poor, asking all who come for aid for news of Bevis of Hampton. Disguising himself as a pilgrim, Bevis approaches the castle and speaks with Josian, but she does not recognize this "niwe palmare", or this new palmer, whatsoever (2134): "whan þe maide seȝ him þar, / Of Beues ȝhe nas noþing war" (2119-2120), or when the maid saw him there, she was not at all aware of Bevis. When she asks Bevis if he knows of her knight, he affirms that he does "wel inouȝ!" — or 'well enough' — and claims that

he and Bevis are both earls "in is contre," or in his country (2136-2138). While the disguised knight here references his own earldom of Hampton, it is not until he mentions Arondel that Josian considers his professed connection to Bevis to be confirmed:

> At Rome he made me a spel
> Of an hors, men clepede Arondel:
> Wide whar ichaue iwent
> And me warisoun ispent
> I souȝt hit boþe fer & ner,
> Men telleþ me, þat it is her; (2139-2143)

He explains that while in Rome, Bevis told him "a spel" (2139) or story about a horse named Arondel, and that he has since traveled widely and spent his money to seek this horse "fer & ner" (2142), or far and near, until men told him it was here (at Mombraunt). Once Bevis mentions Arondel, Josian believes his claim and takes him to the stables to meet the horse he has supposedly sought for so long. Only now, as Josian brings Bevis to his horse, does his resemblance to her lost love strike her: "'Ner þis mannes browe to-tore, / Me wolde þenke be his fasoun, / Þat hit were Beues of Hamtoun!'" (2153-2156), or 'were not this man's brow torn, I would think by his appearance that it was Bevis of Hampton.' Bevis's scarred face ostensibly hampers her recognition of him, but she does not note the similarities between this "niwe palmare" and her knight until after he mentions Arondel: his knowledge of and desire for Arondel alert Josian to further connections between the two men. The text even remarks upon this lapse: "Iosian be-held him *be-fore*" (2149, emphasis added). Despite having looked at him previously, she must bring him toward Arondel in order to perceive any resemblance, whereupon she calls to Boneface and notes Bevis's scarred brow, as shown above. The text seems to draw attention to her lack of

recognition and focuses instead on Arondel as the only functioning signifier for Bevis that Josian can comprehend.

But Josian does not fully recognize Bevis until after Arondel does so: as shown above, Arondel moves not a foot until Bevis has his stirrup, whereupon "Beues in to þe sadel him þrew, / Þar bi þat maide him wel knew" (2179-2180), or Bevis threw himself into the saddle, thereby that maid knew him well. Arondel's placid acceptance of Bevis triggers Josian's recognition of the knight: as soon as Bevis sits in the saddle with no violent reaction from his steed, Josian realizes his identity. And once again, the text seems rather ironic in its depiction of Josian's previous ignorance: when Arondel breaks free of his chains and launches himself into the courtyard, Josian laments the steed's escape as disastrous because she does not recognize Bevis, the one knight most capable of taming Arondel (2164-2166). Her interjection, within this context, only serves to emphasize that she has still not realized that the "niwe palmare" is in fact Bevis, even while Arondel and the audience know as much. Only after Bevis has mounted Arondel can she recognize him: "Beues in to þe sadel him þrew, / *Þar bi* þat maide him wel knew" (2179-80, emphasis added). Josian cannot conceive of Bevis without Arondel and so only recognizes him when he is restored to his horse. The chivalric pair acts as a single unit, sharing an affective identity through which Arondel reflects Bevis's heroic figure such that the two are conceptually indistinguishable.

Indeed, Bevis cannot imagine himself without Arondel. After his harrowing escape from prison, Bevis finds himself too weak and hungry to stay on his horse, and Trenchefis throws him off when the other animal shakes himself, as we saw. In response, Bevis falls

into despair, lamenting that "'Whilom ichadde an erl-dam / And an hors gode and snel, / Þat men clepede Arondel'" (1822-24), or 'Formerly I had an earldom and a good and swift horse that men called Arondel.' Here, Bevis links his earldom and his horse as he recalls them together in his lament as equivalent, upsetting losses. Shockingly, he immediately claims he would trade them for food: "Now ich wolde ȝeue hit kof / For a schiuer of a lof!" (1825-1826), or 'Now I would give it quickly for a slice of a loaf.' Crane explains this comment as evidence of Bevis's desperation: both his horse, a costly investment and chivalric signifier, and his noble heritage are integral to his very identity, and so, this moment is clearly hyperbolic in nature and such a trade "thinkable only in a life-or-death moment."[72] However, her reading dismisses the implications when the text ties Arondel to the knight's heritage itself. Even if his frantic offer to trade horse and earldom constitutes desperate hyperbole, Bevis nonetheless links the two together: both are incredibly shocking to trade in such a manner, and he groups both as *equally* important and hyperbolic. In fact, the descriptors for Arondel give the horse more weight in Bevis's lament: while Bevis cites his lost heritage as part of his tragedy, the text gives his "hors gode and snel" two lines over his earldom's half-line reference. Even while Bevis states that he would trade both for a single loaf of bread, he places more emphasis, more elaboration of value, on the horse in the proposed exchange.

While Bevis's proposal here remains hyperbolic, he does at a later point in the romance sacrifice his earldom — his heritage and his identity — for Arondel. After the race and Arondel's exemplary performance therein, King Edgar's son tries to steal Arondel after Bevis refuses to sell him, only for the English prince to be slain by the steed in his

attempted theft. The king demands Bevis's death for this, but the barons decide to spare the knight and instead "hongen is horse" (3572) or hang his horse. Bevis cannot endure such a sentence for his beloved horse, however, and chooses to exile himself from England to save Arondel's life. In doing this, Bevis forsakes not only his land and heritage but also that of his future line: the pregnant Josian will accompany him into exile, and Bevis's punishment trickles down to his unborn and now newly disinherited sons. In his (and their) place, Bevis names his mentor and uncle Saber to be his heir and renounces England altogether:

> 'Nai,' queþ Beues, 'for no catele
> Nel ich lese min hors Arondele,
> Ac min hors for to were
> Ingelonde ich wile for-swere;
> Min eir ich wile make her
> Þis gode kniȝt, min em Saber.' (3575-3580)

Bevis's speech insists that "no catele" (3575), or wealth/property/goods, is worth losing Arondel for, but for his horse he will "for-swere" (3578) England entirely and supplant his own unborn "eir" (3579) with his uncle Saber. Bevis views self-exile as the clear solution because he values Arondel as not only his chivalric partner but also as an extension and reflection of his own identity. Bevis holds true to this perception from the start of the episode: when the English prince sought to buy Arondel from Bevis, the knight had declined, saying, "'Nay,' queth Beves, 'so mot I leve, / Though thow wost me take an hond / Al the hors of Ingelonde!'" (3546-3548), or 'Nay' said Bevis, 'so long as I live, even if you would have me take in hand all the horses of England.' Given the ability to purchase another horse to replace Arondel, or even "al the hors of Ingelonde," Bevis refuses to part

with his steed. Bevis's affective investment in Arondel exceeds the economic or martial value of a knight's horse. However, Cohen reads Bevis's sacrifice for Arondel, whom he admits was "demonstrating as much moral as horse sense" in slaying the would-be thief, as indicative of chivalric identity's dependence on nonhuman bodies.[73] Cohen's claim highlights both the importance of the horse in the knightly pairing as well as Arondel's capacity to understand and respond in a traditionally human — i.e., 'moral' — manner, but Cohen does not emphasize these points in the context of the text's overall patterns of nonhuman animal rationality. Instead, Cohen's focus stays with the knight-and-horse relationship as a machine, a model that inherently strips the affect and rationality from the chivalric unit in favor of emphasizing its interconnected processes. But clearly, this scene seems to present the intimate relationship of knight and horse as superior to the more mechanical pairing of knight and equipment.

There remains some rational component to Arondel's role in this situation: Crane notes that Arondel "was 'in control'" of his actions and "committed a 'wrong' in killing King Edgar's son."[74] She observes that Bevis only tries to save Arondel's life: he does not argue Arondel's culpability in the murder, nor does he deny the accusations. And Crane is correct: Bevis does not even address the issue of his horse's culpability and instead leaps straight to his offer to forswear England. However, Crane interprets Bevis's response differently by tying it to his recognition of his chivalric disadvantage: without a horse, Bevis suffers much higher "physical vulnerability" in battle, and so a threat to Arondel constitutes one to Bevis as well. For Crane, the stakes are not in the morality or rationality of Arondel's actions, but in the knight's own martial and economic investment in the horse

as a chivalric accessory.[75] While this feature of their relationship is certainly in play, this does not negate Bevis's long-standing bond with Arondel. Bevis's affective relationship with Arondel entails that each of them recognizes and responds to the needs and affective states of the other, but here Bevis goes further and equates Arondel with his own identity and person. To lose Arondel does not mean losing his earldom — it is in fact much worse. It seems more akin to losing *himself*. Bevis has survived without his earldom, but not without Arondel, and the horse constitutes not only a chivalric partnership but also a reflection of Bevis and, in that mimetic image, a figure of the-horse-as-becoming-hero.

Admittedly, it may be precarious to claim that Arondel's conflation and identification with Bevis, that his mirroring of his knight, constitutes a sufficient imitation to enter a state of becoming. Yet a mirror reflects what is presented to it: when we stand in front of one, it creates a simulation of ourselves that we rarely hesitate to identify as *us*. We may refer to it as 'my reflection' but more often, when we catch glimpses of ourselves or others reflected, we are more likely to think of those images as 'me' or 'you.' I can know my hair is messy because I see it so in the mirror, but I almost never consider each step of that logic — that by seeing that my *reflection's* hair is messy, I can extrapolate that *my* hair is messy. We skip the distance and differentiation of 'reflection' and automatically identify it as ourselves. But the reflection is still a simulacrum, and when the mirror is cracked or dirtied, we more easily identify the mirror-as-intermediary: the facsimile is exposed as a reflection, as not-us. And so, when the text mirrors Arondel and Bevis, it creates a reflective imitation that at points conflates the two — Bevis is Arondel, Arondel is Bevis. Their identities intertwine like images in a glass, even while their physical "real" bodies never

change. In this way, the text's conflation and mirroring of Arondel with Bevis serves to depict the horse as becoming-hero.

Above the Rational: Arondel's Soul

Bevis's self-exile in response to the threat on Arondel's life foreshadows his own death and the closing of the romance itself. As the narrative draws to an end, Bevis has attained his vengeance and reclaimed Hampton, his sons are mature, with holdings of their own, and Josian has fallen ill. Full of sorrow for Josian's state, Bevis goes to the stable to visit his beloved steed:

> Arondel a fond þar ded,
> Þat euer hadde be gode at nede;
> Þar fore him was swiþe wo,
> In to chaumber he gan go
> & seȝ Iosian drawe to dede:
> Him was wo a moste nede,
> And er her body be-gan to colde,
> In is armes he gan hire folde,
> And þar hii deide boþe ifere. (4597-4605)

He finds Arondel "ded" (4597) in his stall and suffers "swiþe wo" (4599), or intense sorrow, at the sight. Retreating to his private chambers, Bevis finds Josian "drawe to dede" (4601), or near to death, and he takes her into his arms before "her body be-gan to colde" (4603), or before her body began to grow cold. They both die "ifere" (4605), together. While Josian's illness and death grieve Bevis to "moste nede" (4602), or to greatest need, Arondel's death ends his life: without their intimate bond, Bevis cannot exist. Indeed, Arondel's death triggers that of Bevis and Josian, ultimately ending the narrative. The text makes it clear that Josian is dying before Bevis comes across Arondel's corpse — "Þanne

swiche siknesse the leuedi tok, / Out of þis world ȝhe moste wende" (4590-91), or then the lady took such an illness that she must go out of this world, implying she has not yet done so — but only after Arondel has passed does Josian rapidly deteriorate: "Iosian *drawe to* dede" (4601), "her body *be-gan to* colde" (4603), and "þar hii deide *boþ ifere*" (4605). Josian rapidly begins to die/draws toward death after Arondel's demise, and she does not die until Bevis holds her in their bed. The text too closely links Arondel and Bevis for one to survive without the other. Their affective and chivalric bonds merge to create a single, reflective identity.[76] But more than that, the poem treats Arondel as a character equal to the knight's, not only through his companionship with Bevis but also through his rational personality and his shift out of the category of nonhuman animal and into the state of becoming-hero. By necessity, the romance itself must end with Arondel's life.

To that end, the romance's closing lines are the most telling. The text concludes by stating that masses are sung for the heroes' souls — and as before, the poem does not separate Bevis and Arondel:

> An hous he made of riligioun,
> For to singe for Sire Beuoun
> And ek for Iosian þe fre:
> God on here saules haue pité!
> & also for Arondel,
> ȝif men for eni hors bidde schel, (4613-4618)

The manuscript presents the lines as a miniature hierarchy: the religious house sings for Bevis on one line, Josian the next, pauses to bid "pité" (4616) or 'mercy' for their souls, and then ends on Arondel in the conditional. The passage represents almost a sliding scale of rationality or even the human/nonhuman animal hierarchy of the Great Chain of Being.

Thomas Aquinas, like many medieval thinkers, asserted that nonhuman animals do not possess souls and therefore cannot be divinely resurrected or taken into heaven.[77] The romance's careful use of the conditional here, then, makes sense: it must be "ȝif" one should pray because the conditions for doing so are always and already incommensurable in contemporary thought. And yet, the conditional does not close the door on the *possibility* of praying for Arondel.

Nonetheless, the text remains very carefully within the bounds of medieval theology: it insists that the house sings prayers for the "saules" of Josian and Bevis, and "also for Arondel" but does not directly specify a soul for the horse — it merely *implies* one. As if to support this hesitation, Crane interprets that last quoted line ("ȝif men for eni hors bidde schel" [4618], or if men should pray for any horse) as "backtracking" and "retreat[ing] toward orthodoxy": she reads the romance's closing lines "God ȝeue vs alle Is benesoun! / Amen" (4621-21), or 'God give us all His blessing, Amen,' as ensuring that "Arondel is not one of the 'us' blessed by God."[78] However, the songs cannot be unsung: they remain present in the text in what Crane calls an "interlinear clashing."[79] The masses cannot be erased by the closing lines: they have been and continue to be sung in the words preceding. However, the romance's conclusion is not any sort of retreat. The conditional provides safety in ambiguity, but the lines refuse to fully differentiate between Bevis and Arondel, between human and nonhuman animal. The very nature of the conditional phrase implies that the possibility *cannot* be closed: the conditional opens the option as viable under the correct circumstances and leaves it in a perpetual state of potential. Thus, it is not a retreat, but an invitation: it is by its nature allowing for belief. The text here has the

opportunity to answer the question of Arondel's soul and close off the matter entirely, but it instead throws it open and insists upon the possibility that one may pray for a horse. The very structure of the verse, its rhyming couplets, connects "Arondel" to "bidde schel," metrically aligning the horse with prayer. The visual layout of the line furthers this implication: the line previous places "Arondel" atop "for eni horse" and leaves the eye to catch up both phrases together and complete the line's "bidde shel." The text leads the reader to this question and presents its own answer: if men for any horse should pray, then they should pray for Arondel.

The text's conditional phrasing, also, befits Arondel's intermediary state of perpetual becoming: Arondel the horse, the becoming-hero, represents a continuous and untapped potential energy. He is always becoming-hero, becoming-more-than-'animal,' but Deleuze's and Guattari's becomings-animal do not possess objective conclusions — they are always becomings *in potentia*. The poem's "3if" acts as a textual parallel of Arondel's becoming: the conditional presents praying for Arondel as a practicable potential, and in doing so questions the contemporary norm that nonhuman animals, lacking intrinsic value, have no soul for which to pray. While the line can be discounted as conditional, the invitation and the potential of it, woven through the major, cannot be retracted. Once evoked, the idea of praying for a horse — as a worthy option, no less — cannot be so easily erased. In this text, with its conditional invitation, it is possible for one to imagine that Arondel has a soul for which to pray.

Conclusion

Bevis of Hampton presents Arondel as more than a warhorse ruled by training and instinct: as a rational animal, he can develop and reciprocate affective bonds with Bevis and enter a state of becoming-hero. The affective bond between knight and horse does not itself enact this shift, but rather how the text emphasizes Arondel's participation in that bond and his conflation with Bevis serves to render Arondel as, one could even say, becoming-human. Yet even as Arondel is becoming-hero, Bevis cannot remain unaffected: as Arondel is conflated with and mirrors him, so is Bevis conflated with and mirrored in Arondel. Both knight and horse enter a becoming, and we could say that they are, together, becoming-chivalry. Their affective conflation through shared emotions can function as a model, perhaps, to render these two as shared becomings. Both are imitating and reflecting each other, working toward a common becoming while aware of the other's state of becoming: knight and horse work together in tandem so as to become a single, chivalric unit. But they are always and already two creatures instead of one, both miming and becoming together but never fully become.

Nonetheless, the romance — and Bevis himself — treat Arondel as a fully rational animal, and the text even offers the possibility of a soul that contemporary belief insisted the horse could not possess: thus, the conditional nature of praying for Arondel's soul. The conditional opens the potential for the existence of Arondel's soul, like a syntactical minor gesture, and disrupts the normative belief that a horse cannot possess one. The conditional implies that certain conditions can activate the power to sing prayers for a horse's soul, but it does so without challenging, one way or the other, whether those conditions are even

possible. And yet, Arondel has already shown himself to be rational, has undermined the definition of rationality as an exclusively human property, and so, the romance seems to coyly intimate, why cannot the horse also possess a soul? The text cannot answer that question, of course, because becomings do not ever become — becoming is a process that does not and cannot finish. Arondel is becoming-hero, but he can never become-hero. He cannot become-human. But here, too, the romance challenges what it means to be human at all: if Arondel is rational, then it cannot be a trait exclusive to human animals. The text implies that humans are not exceptional, as a human animal and a horse animal can be rational partners in a reciprocative, affective bond. Instead, the text teases its audience: safely ensconced in its generic space of play, the romance claims that only the existence of Arondel's soul is uncertain — a condition that remains *in potentia*.

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[1] *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home,* directed by Leonard Nimoy (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 1986), DVD.

[2] Citations refer to line numbers from Eugen Kölbing's *The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, EETS e.s. 46, 48, 65 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trübner & Co., 1885-94). Readings of the manuscript layout rely on the digitized facsimile of the Auchinleck MS. See David Burnley and Alison Wiggins, eds., *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, in *The Auchinleck Manuscript,* National Library of Scotland, updated July 5, 2003, https://auchinleck.nls.uk/mss/beues.html. Glosses of the Middle English rely on the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*), last modified February 2016, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/.

[3] *MED*, s.v. "lēl (adj. & n.)."

[4] *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) *Online*, s.v. "chivalry, *n*.," last modified March 2016, http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/. For more on the knight-and-horse relationship, see Irving Linn, "The Arming of Sir Thopas," *Modern Language Notes* 51. 5 (1936): 310; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), esp. 46; Susan Crane, "Knight and Horse," in *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), esp. 139-140.

[5] For more on horses in medieval England, including breeding, pricing, and categorizations, see Ewart Oakeshott, *A Knight and his Horse* (Chester Springs, PA: Dufour Editions, 1998); Christopher Gravett, *English Medieval Knight 1300-1400* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2002); R. H. C. Davis, *The Medieval Warhorse: Origin, Development and Redevelopment* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1989); Michael Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Ann Hyland, *The Warhorse 1250-1600* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1998); John Clark, ed., *The Medieval Horse and Its Equipment c.1150-c.1450*, illust. Nigel Harris and Susan Mitford (1995;

Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2004); and Thorlac Turville-Petre, "Alliterative Horses," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 112, no. 2 (2013): 154-168.

[6] This project will focus primarily on the more complete Auchinleck MS, as the five extant versions of *Bevis of Hampton* are widely varying and editors consider the Auchinleck's rendition is considered the most complete and "the best" version. See Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., *Bevis of Hampton*, in *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 188.

[7] Again, I employ the constructions 'human and nonhuman animal' or 'human and other animals' to avoid framing my argument around the "human" as separate from the "animal" in general. When referring to the 'rational animal,' or a specific nonhuman animal (such as, in this case, the horse Arondel), I drop the modifier 'nonhuman' as redundant.

[8] Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, trans. English Dominican Fathers (Westminster, MD, 1952), 2, 9, 141.

[9] For more, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. The English Dominican Fathers, 4 Vols. (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, ltd., 1924), and Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of the Summa Theologica of St. Aquinas: Pars Prima*, ed. Beradus Bonjoannes (London: Thomas Baker, 1906). See also the introduction to this dissertation.

[10] Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2010), 5; Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1-2, 13.2.

[11] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone, 1988), xvi, 240.

[12] Karen Simecek, "Affect Theory," *The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory* 25, no. 1 (2017): 418-419.

[13] John Michael, "What Are Shared Emotions (for)?," *Frontiers in Psychology*, 24 March 2016, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00412; Simecek, "Affect Theory," 423-424.

[14] Michael Richardson, *Gestures of Testimony: Torture, Trauma, and Affect in Literature* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016): 155; Simecek, "Affect Theory," 432-434.

[15] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 240, 258; Laura Cull, "Affect in Deleuze, Hijikata, and Coates: The Politics of Becoming-Animal in Performance," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 26, no. 2 (2012): 189.

[16] For more on affect theory's applications to medieval literature, see Victoria Blud's "Emotional Bodies: Cognitive Neuroscience and Mediaeval Studies," *Literature Compass* 13, no. 6 (2016): 457-466.

[17] Maud Burnett McInerney, "Gauvan and Gringalet: Comic Masculinities in *Paien de Maisières*." *Arthuriana* 24, no. 1 (2014): 20.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Abou Bekr ibn Bedr, *Le Naceri*, trans. M. Perron, 3 Vols (Paris: Ministry of Agriculture of France, 1860), esp. Vol. II, 141, 151-153, 164, 175; and Ann Hyland, *The Medieval Warhorse from Byzantium to the Crusades* (Dover, NH: Alan Sutton Publishing Inc, 1994), 116-117.

[20] Hyland, *The Medieval Warhorse*, 116-117, 183n76.

[21] Crane, "Knight and Horse," 157.

[22] *Boeve de Haumtone* survived in two fourteenth-century manuscripts (and several fragments), both incomplete and reliant on foreign translations to fill textual gaps: Paris, Bibliothéque Nationale, nouv.aq.fr. 4532, and the other, donated to the University Library of Loufain, was destroyed during a 1944 bombing of WWII. While both the Anglo-Norman and Middle English texts likely shared twelfth-century origins, the original text from which both were derived is now lost. See Albert Stimming's introduction to *Der Anglonormannische Boeve de Haumtone* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1899), iii-iv; and Judith Weiss, *Boeve de Haumtone*, in *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic: Two Anglo-Norman Romances* (Temple, AZ: ACMRS, 2008), 3, 9.

[23] All textual citations for the Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone* refer to line numbers from Albert Stimming's edition, *Der Aglonormannische Boeve de Haumtone*. The English translation, when given with page numbers, quotes Judith Weiss's *Boeve de Haumtone*. When page numbers are not given, translations refer to the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary (AND) Online edition,* last modified 2015, http://www.anglo-

norman.net/gate/. For the sake of clarity, when referring to the Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone*, I use the forms Boeve and Arundel to refer to the titular knight and his horse; for the Middle English, Bevis and Arondel.

[24] The phrasing almost never varies (2491, 3137, 3234, 3502, 3615) [72, 83, 84, 90, 91]. The literal translation reads more as 'to leave,' 'hand over,' or 'release,' as well as 'to allow'; see *AND,* s.v. "laier."

[25] *AND*, s.v. "kernu."

[26] Ibid., s.v. "bruir"; ibid., s.v. "bruire."

[27] *MED*, s.v. "thinken (v.(2))."

[28] Xenophon, *On the Art of Horsemanship*, in *Xenophan, VII: Scripta Minora*, trans. E.C. Marchant, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), 354-355; see also Jordanus Rufus, *La science du cheval au Moyen Age: Le "Traité d'hippiatre" de Jordanus Rufus*, ed. Brigitte Prévot (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991), 39-40. For more on horse training manuals and practices, see Vinciane Despret, "The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthropo-zoo-genesis," *Body and Society* 10 (2004): 111-134, esp. 115; and Crane, "Knight and Horse," 157-158.

[29] *MED*, s.v. "underyē˘ten (v.)."

[30] Medieval romance often depicts Saracens as monstrous and magical figures, but the Auchinleck MS itself highlights Saracen ensorcellment of horses: in *Richard Coer d'Lyon*, Saladin attempts to kill King Richard through a ruse with an enchanted horse who, calmed, stills for its rider to mount him. For more on medieval conceptions of the East and the Other, see Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, & Jews* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000); and Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

[31] Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 61.

[32] *MED*, s.v. "steven(e (n.(1))."

[33] Ibid., s.v. "nevenen (v.)."

[34] Ibid.

[35] *AND*, s.v. "nomer"; ibid., s.v. "seu"; ibid., s.v. "sen."

[36] *MED*, s.v. "prīd(e (n.(2))."

[37] See Herzman, Drake, and Salisbury, *Bevis of Hampton*, 332n2164-66.

[38] *MED*, s.v. "lacchen (v.(1))"; Ibid., s.v. "laughen (v.)."

[39] Crane, "Knight and Horse," 155-56.

[40] For more on corvid intelligence, see J. J. A. Müller, J. J. M. Massen, T. Bugnyar, and M. Osvath, "Ravens Remember the Nature of a Single Reciprocal Interaction Sequence over 2 Days and even After a Month," *Animal Behavior* 128 (2017): 69-78; *Inside the Animal Mind*, episode 2, "The Problem Solvers," presented by Chris Packham, produced by Graham Russell, aired 05 February 2014, on BBC Two; Dave Mosher, "Crows Display Incredible Common Sense," *Live Science*, 16 August 2007; and Stephanie Pappas, "Hitchcockian Crows Spread the Word about Unkind Humans," *Live Science*, 28 June 2011.

[41] Cecilie M. Medjell, Turid Buvik, Grete H. M. Jørgensen, Knut E. Bøe, "Horses Can Learn to Use Symbols to Communicate their Preferences," *Applied Animal Behavior Science* 184 (2016): 66-73. The study trained a small sample size of horses to identify and successfully utilize simple symbols to indicate three options regarding their warming blankets: on, off, or no change. For more studies on equine intelligence, see E. B. Hanggi, "The thinking horse: cognition and perception reviewed," in *Proceedings of the 51st Annual Convention of the American Association of Equine Practitioners: Seattle, Washington, December 3-7, 2005* (Lexington, KY: AAEP, 2005): 246-255; S. L. Marinier and A. J. Alexander, "The use of a maze in testing learning and memory in horses," *Applied Animal Behavioral Science* 39 (1994): 177-182; and E. B. Hanggi and J. F. Ingersoll, "Long-term memory for categories and concepts in horses (Equus caballus)," *Animal Cognition* 12 (2009): 451-462.

[42] The TEAMS edition playfully comments that this race "functions as a demonstration of Arondel's 'horsepower'"; see Herzman, Drake, and Salisbury, *Bevis of Hampton*, 337n3513-42.

[43] *MED*, s.v. "trusten (v.)."

[44] Crane, "Knight and Horse," 159-160; McInerny, "Gauvan and Gringalet," 20; Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 50.

[45] Crane, "Knight and Horse," 159-160.
[46] Hyland, *The Medieval Warhorse*, 8; Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 37.
[47] To be fair, the scribe or translator likely did not know much about horses or riding, as few in that profession would have anything beyond the basics of riding a gentle courser at a slow pace, whereas "[a]ctive riding, in contrast, is a highly specialized skill"; see McInerney, "Gauvan and Gringalet," 20.
[48] Simecek, "Affect Theory," 423-424; Michael "What Are Shared Emotions (for)?," 412.
[49] *AND,* s.v. "maltalent."
[50] Ibid., s.v. "cerf[2]."
[51] Editors typically gloss the preposition "o" as "with" or "accompanied by"; *AND*, s.v. "od." While Weiss glosses it as "on" here, presenting Arondel as a tool upon which Bevis succeeds, the term's more regular usage seems to dismiss Arondel entirely as mere ornament.
[52] Bill Kent, "The Horse was in Charge," *The New York Times*, 04 May 1997. Both horse owners and showrunners insisted on the "genuineness of the horses' desire to dive of their own free will" and that "no compulsion [was] ever necessary in their training"; Albert H. Broadwell, "Diving Horses," *The Strand* (June 1900), 699, 697. The attraction garnered careful attention from the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), who in the 1920s brought charges of animal cruelty against a horse-diving rider at Lick Pier, Ocean Park, but the municipal court ruled the rider not guilty following the testimonies of "veterinarians and animal experts"; "Diving Not Cruelty," *Variety* 87.12 (July 6, 1927): 51. The activity continued into the late 1990s, and many of these shows seemed popular, despite venues refusing to employ them, and several states had already banned the performances. Public backlash, such as through organizations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), had sought to shut down the shows, but owners resisted, claiming the horses did not suffer but lived as "'movie stars'": "'They are fed, given a place to sleep, manicured, given new shoes, brushed and taken all over the country,"' and one commented that the mules' carrot reward was "like a $50 bill to them"'; Philip Broughton, "Mule-diving for the high jump," *Spectator*, August 22, 1998. No one seems to have observed that the majority of the horses' supposed "star" treatment more or less constituted basic equine care.
[53] Mrs. French's sister and fellow diver, Sonora Webster Carver, suffered blindness when one or multiple such blows from horse diving detached her retinas; see Kent, "The Horse was in Charge."
[54] Ibid.
[55] *MED*, s.v. "vileinī(e (n.)."
[56] Such specific targeting was not only common enough in battle but also known in romances: knights occasionally dismount to avoid damaging their horses. For an example of Gawain dismounting to spare Gringalet, see Raoul de Houdenc, *La Vengeance Raguidel*, ed. Gilles Roussineau (Genève: Libraire Droz S.A., 2004), lines 935ff.
[57] *MED*, s.v. "wīten (v.(3))."
[58] Crane, "Knight and Horse," 163. The contemporary romance *Ywain and Gawain*, as discussed in this project's introduction, similarly grants intrinsic value to its nonhuman animal companion, Ywain's lion.
[59] While nonhuman animals did not have intrinsic value in medieval thought, the literature often challenged that assumption, as we start to see in twelfth-century saints' lives; see Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 150-152. For more on the medieval definitions of the nonhuman animal and the rise of literature's undermining of that definition, see this project's introduction.
[60] Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 52-54, 51.
[61] *MED*, s.v. "gilt (n.(1))." The term can also mean "wicked conduct," which somewhat implies that Bevis is equally to blame. If he had dismounted Trenchefis to fight on foot, the horse would have survived — as Boeve does to spare Arondel in another sequence in *Boeve de Haumtone* (1705-1706).
[62] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 137. Gerald L. Bruns, "Becoming-Animal (Some Simple Ways)," *New Literary History* 38, no. 4 (2007): 703; Cull, "Affect in Deleuze," 194.
[63] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 305, 238.
[64] Ibid., 238, 273, 283, 304-305.
[65] Ibid., 275.
[66] Cull, "Affect in Deleuze," 195.

[67] *MED*, s.v. "ginne (n.)." See also Herzman, Drake, and Salisbury, *Bevis of Hampton*, 242.
[68] *MED*, s.v. "rāketeie (n.)"; Ibid., s.v. "bē͡nd(e (n.(1))." The term "bende" can also indicate a more general sense of imprisonment, but its use in conjunction with "rakenteis" close before suggests its first definition of 'chains' or 'shackles' in this passage.
[69] *MED*, s.v. "misēse (n.)." In addition to having his right brow bitten off by an adder (1554), the wound painful and stinking (1571-1574), Bevis suffers incredible hunger pains (1569) and frequent beatings from his jailers (1601).
[70] Burnley and Wiggins, eds, *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*.
[71] Both pieces of gear were powerful symbols of knightly identity, so much so that the climax of the ceremonial investing of a knight was the donning of his sword and spurs, and on the other extreme, their removal functioned as a symbolic degradation. See Linn, "The Arming of Sir Thopas," 310.
[72] Crane, "Knight and Horse," 162.
[73] Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines,* 61.
[74] Crane, "Knight and Horse," 164.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Similarly, the lion in *Ywain and Gawain* becomes inextricable from Sir Ywain's identity, such that the text and characters within it know him only through the lion, either through the creature's presence — including leading or being followed by, riding/laying alongside, or in some way as two in one pair (2012, 2014, 2050, 2057, 2208, 2220, 2340, 2424, 2521, 2707, 2732, 2895, 2951, 3116, 3187, 3455, 3929, 3954, 3961) — or via the moniker the "Knight with the Lyoun" (2662, 2775, 2783, 2804, 2830, 2863, 2886, 3799, 3818, 3917, 4020). And, even after Ywain has supposedly surrendered the latter title, the poem does not conclude until the lion's own happiness is assured as equal to Ywain's: "In joy and blis thai led thaire live. / So did Lunet and the liown" (2024-2025), or in joy and bliss they (Ywain and Alundyne) led their lives, so did Lunette (Alundyne's *hende* handmaid) and the lion. The romance places the lion on equal footing with the human characters, and Ywain's joyful life cannot be a certainty until that of the lion, as the other half of his knightly identity, is also secure. For more on this fourteenth-century romance, see the introduction of this dissertation.
[77] Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, 2, 9, 141.
[78] Crane, "Knight and Horse," 167.
[79] Ibid.

Chapter 2. 'The Most Dangerous Game': Hunting Humans and Traumatic Self- Skinning in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*[1]

They flee from me that sometime did me seek
With naked foot, stalking in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,
That now are wild and do not remember

- Sir Thomas Wyatt[2]

When Gawain returns from his adventure at the Green Chapel in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, he bears the green girdle across his armor — his self-proclaimed "syngne for my surfet" (2433) and "token of vntrawþe" (2519), or the symbol for his misdeed and token of dishonesty/faithlessness.[3] But Gawain's peers of the Round Table misunderstand their companion, and when they, too, don green baldrics to imitate Sir Gawain, they do so for "þe renoun of þe Rounde Table" and their own "honour" (2519-2520). The Knights of the Round Table cannot understand Gawain's story, cannot reconcile his courtly reputation with his report of chivalric failure. And so, they reframe Gawain's narrative within a different, more familiar context: one of chivalric success, wherein his shame is taken to be humility.[4] This reframing is in fact necessary since Gawain himself cannot properly express the trauma the green girdle represents, for, as with most trauma, Gawain's is ultimately unfathomable and inexpressible even to himself.[5] Gawain is thus marked twofold, as Norman Simms notes, by his scar and by the girdle that covers it, and while the knights mimic the girdle by wearing it as a baldric, Gawain "cannot share [the scar] even though it

is the stigma which assigns its meaning to the green girdle."[6] Gawain's inability to articulate his trauma, and the Round Table's inability to reconcile their honored fellow with courtly fault, lead the knights — and often, the romance's audience — to see the girdle as the sign of a chivalric dishonor. Indeed, scholars have long been reading *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with a strong preference for its chivalric context, setting aside or overlooking the parts of the narrative that do not fit that perspective. The interlaced hunting and bedroom scenes constitute a chief example: scholars often read with the hunts and skinning sequences acting as a metaphor for Gawain's courtly trial and eventual chivalric fall. It is uncommon that the two sequences are viewed from the other direction: with the courtly scenes acting as the metaphor for the hunt, and eventual skinning, of Gawain himself. And so, allow me to do a bit of reframing myself: I suggest that the hunting scenes are the primary lens of the poem, rather than a secondary filter or a metaphor through which to view Gawain's courtly trial. Hunting as a theme runs throughout the poem, acting as an overarching narrative model through which audiences can re-examine Gawain's notorious bedroom "asay" as part of the romance's hunting rituals. In this interpretation, Gawain does not fail a chivalric test but rather is himself skinned as an animal of the hunt.[7]

However, the poem's revelation that humans are huntable — are indeed themselves animals — is not merely a *reduction* of humanity into animality, and to conclude such is to participate in the very human exceptionalism that the romance seems so determined to dismantle. Bear in mind that the overall culture of the fourteenth century held humans as exceptional, compared to nonhuman animals, because of the rationality of the human intellect, the human mind.[8] Thomas Aquinas, for one, defined man, with his immortal soul

and rational mind, as a person with intrinsic value, while the nonhuman animal, irrational and defined by instrumental value, was merely a thing.[9] However, the romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* instead seems to propose, safely within the confines of the romance genre, that humans are in and of themselves animals. Humans, like the animals slain and skinned in the poem, are fair game for the hunt.

Hunting, its processes and rituals, are a striking part of the text. The hunting scenes in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are famous for their detail as each game animal is skinned and dressed with manual-like precision. The hunt itself was a "gentle game and disport" reserved primarily for the aristocracy, and hunters themselves were "less displeasable unto God."[10] The skinning of game in the medieval era was quite a strict process of cutting, shaping, and transforming skins through set codes of procedure. In fact, hunting and skinning was ritualized enough to draw scorn from Salisbury and Erasmus: in *Policraticus,* Salisbury warns "not to misuse any of their hunting jargon in speaking, or you will be flogged or be branded with ignorance of all propriety in displaying your lack of knowledge of their technique," while Erasmus comments that anyone can carve up cattle, "but only a gentleman has the right to carve wild game."[11] These passages are meant to be parodic, yes, but their humor derives from some truth behind the hyperbolic claims. Skinning held a certain, inherent power: it was a display of class skill but also, as William Marvin describes it, a "transformative moment of [...] unmaking."[12] Marvin's description of the aristocratic skinning rituals highlights the ability of the "hunter's craft to draw off the integuments of skin and enable a forbidden view of the soul's volatility, or even

absence."[13] The skin, then, can be a type of shield for the soul as well as the body's innards, and its removal allows a glimpse of a creature's internal physical and spiritual nature.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight does not shy away from this procedural, powerful approach but devotes entire passages to the process of "unmaking" the animals that Bertilak has captured. However, not all hunting ritual was centered on this disassembly of the body: "the lord shall take up the hart's head by the right side between the surroyal and the fork or troche whichever it be that he bear, and the Master of the Game, the left side in the same wise, and hold the head upright that the nose touch the earth."[14] Even after the animal (in this case a deer) has been broken down entirely, the hunters ritualistically recreate its body, reforming and remaking it to its original state. It is clear that *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* participates in the traditions put forth by hunting manuals, but this dynamic of hunting and skinning is not limited to its hunting scenes — the poem itself revolves around the hunt.

Christmas Crasher: The Green Knight as Hunter

From the moment that the Green Knight enters King Arthur's court at the New Year's feast, he bears an aura of the hunt.[15] Despite his axe, the Green Knight appears otherwise unarmed: the text repeatedly points out that the Green Knight wears no armor, having left it and all his weapons "at home" (268). The Green Knight himself says as much: "'I haue a hauberghe at home and a helme boþ, / A schelde anda a scharp spere, schinande bryȝt, / And oþer weppenes to welde"' (268-270), or 'I have both a mail-coat and helm at home, a shield and a sharp spear, shining bright, and other weapons to wield.' When Arthur

asks him if he seeks a "batayl bare" (277), the Green Knight insists that he "frayst [...] no fyȝt" (279), or seek[s] no fight, and again points out his lack of arms. Even the Green knight's subsequent boast — "*If* I were hasped in armes on a heȝe stede, / Here is no mon me to mach, for myȝtez so wayke" (281-282, emphasis added), or 'if I were buckled in armor on a high steed, there is no man here to match me, for (you are) so weak of might' — draws attention to the absence of them. However, while the Green Knight lacks any telling chivalric armor, he nonetheless wears the "clene spures" (158) or bright spurs that mark him as a knight.[16] His self-conscious reference to his lack of "a heȝe stede" highlights another feature of the Green Knight's appearance: he has ridden a "rouncé" (304), a horse that, while often as strong as a warhorse, was used for either non-knightly cavalry or as a simple riding horse.[17] Nonetheless, medieval texts from romances to horsemarket records were typically inconsistent or unspecific in naming the types of horseflesh utilized, often defaulting to *equus* or *hors*.[18] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* itself never uses the term *war horse* or *destrer* in the text, though the romance refers to Gringalet freely by name (597, 748, 776, 2047, 2062, 2160, and 2480), a famed destrier in Arthurian tradition. The poem seems less concerned with matters of war than with chivalric accoutrements. Instead, it commonly refers to horses as either a *hors* or *stede*, with no reference to a specific category outside the Green Knight's *rouncé*. While the term fits the alliteration of the line, the unique use here of *rouncé* nonetheless implies that the type of horse the Green Knight rides is significant: a horse powerful enough for war but not typically meant for battle. The text separates the Green Knight's presence from martial intentions, and his horse, like his axe and spurs, is not the proper battle equipment he left at home.

The text is thus rather insistent that the strange interloper does not act in a martial capacity. The focus on the Green Knight's attire is understandable, since his appearance is fantastical, and the poem devotes something of a blazon — or even an inverse-arming scene — to him, beginning with the knight's hood and moving down to his unshod feet. And that small detail of his being "scholes vnder schankes" (160), or shoeless under calves, gives the audience a hint at what the Green Knight's purpose may be: instead of a knight's typical "steel shoes," the Green Knight wears only stockings, which were popular additions to fourteenth-century armor but typically so *beneath* said armor.[19] Editors Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron observe that this detail reinforces the Green Knight's unarmed state, but they also briefly note that because he wears "only stockings or soft socks," he is more appropriately dressed for "peaceful pursuits" — like the aristocratic sport of *hunting*.[20] This brief aside gestures at unexplored implications in the Green Knight's appearance. If he came to Arthur's court as a hunter, then what is he hunting?

First, let us look at the *Crystemas gomen* he offers (283-300). The Green Knight demands an exchange of blows, even offering to "bide þe first bur as bare as [he] sitte" (drawing attention yet again to his unarmed or "bare" state). What I want to focus on in the Green Knight's proposal is its attention to exchange, which he emphasizes twice in his speech: first in his initial offer for someone to "strike a strok for anoþer" (283) and then again in his reiteration that, as he says, "And I schal stonde hym a strok, stif on þis flet, / Ellez þou wyl diȝt me þe dom to dele hym anoþer" (294-295), or 'And I shall take from him a stroke/blow, bold in this hall, provided you will grant me the authority to deal him another.' This game serves as only the first of two exchange-oriented bargains in the poem.

The Green Knight's alter ego, Bertilak, introduces the second bargain when he offers another Christmas game to Gawain while the traveling knight rests at Hautdesert a year later: Bertilak tells Gawain,

> '[.....] a forwarde we make:
> Quatsoeuer I wynne in þe wod hit worþez to yourez
> And quat chek so ȝe acheue change me þerforne.
> Swete, swap we so: sware with trawþe,
> Queþer leude so lymp lere oþer better,' (1105-1109)

Bertilak offers Gawain a "forwarde" (1105) or 'agreement' to "swap" (1108), meaning 'exchange' or 'strike' (see below) whatever Bertilak "wynne[s]" (1106) in the woods with whatever "chek" (1107), either 'doom' or 'success' Gawain achieves. They swear to the terms "with trawþe" (1108), that is, swear on their honor, and agree to exchange their winnings no matter if one fares "lere oþer better" (1109), which editors typically gloss as 'worse or better.' Of particular interest here are the words *chek*, *swap*, and *lere*: typically, editors modernize these terms as *chek*: 'doom, bad luck';[21] *swap*: 'strike a bargain, exchange (?)';[22] and *lere*: 'worse (?).'[23] Note that for two-thirds of these terms, editors Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron mark the glosses as uncertain for this passage. As with *chek* in particular, the above gloss seems tailored to a presupposed (and negative) context. And yet when the word *chek* appears in Middle English in the specific formulation "chek acheven," it means to 'achieve a feat, have success.' Looking at the syntax of the above passage ("quat *chek* so ȝe *acheue*"), this achievement-oriented (and more positive) gloss fits better for the passage's syntactic context as well as its narrative context. Despite the aristocratic culture of hospitality and Bertilak's role as a generous host, the "sinister overtones" of Andrew and Waldron's gloss — that Bertilak will trade what he 'wins' for

Gawain's 'bad luck'[24] — neglects the more likely positive connotation — that Bertilak will exchange what he 'wins' for what Gawain 'achieves.' That is not to say that both connotations are not at play, as audiences who know the tale already can interpret Gawain's coming trial at the Green Chapel as haunting this passage even before it has passed. However, to disregard the equivalence in the exchange being presented also undermines the text's parallels between this second bargain and the first. And the text almost self-consciously creates that parallel in these bargains — if we look at the term *swap*, we see that editors more frequently gloss the word as either the noun, 'a blow or stroke' or the verb, 'to strike.'[25] The additional particulars of 'striking *a bargain*' are unique to this instance and suggest that editors emphasize the gloss's metaphorical meaning without considering the implications of the literal definition.[26] Mainly, the phrasing 'strike we so' evokes the Green Knight's previous *game* (as seen above, "strike a strok for anoþer" [283]) and highlights the parallel between the two bargains.

By contrast, the term *lere* proves harder to pin down.[27] While the standard gloss of 'worse' still holds well in the passage's context, the word also bears connotations of 'flesh,' 'body,' or 'meat.'[28] The line could be rendered, then, as 'to whichever man belongs flesh or better.'[29] When considering the overall context of the bargain — that Bertilak will exchange what he has won while hunting with Gawain's own domestic successes — this more gruesome reading proves rather appropriate. Whether hide or meat from the forests, or "better" (like a kiss, perhaps?), Bertilak and Gawain will exchange one for the other. And, of course, there persists the first *game*: an exchange of beheadings, flesh for flesh. Editors have glossed all three terms variously as meaning an 'attack,' a 'blow' or to 'strike,'

and ‘flesh’ or ‘meat’ either elsewhere within this poem or others of the Pearl Poet. The persistent connotations to strikes and flesh in these terms, as well as the hesitant and uncertain glossing of words in this passage, serve to open parallels between the two *games*: the violent underpinnings of this second proposal reflect and connect to those of the original Christmas Game — an exchange of blows and rent flesh. Even without the overshadowing hunt that constitutes Bertilak’s side of the deal, the romance shades this second bargain with the echoes of the Green Knight’s first bargain.

The Game’s Afoot: Gawain as Hunted Prey

If Bertilak’s later hunt takes root in the preceding *Crystemas gomen* the Green Knight proposes at the poem’s start, then his quarry in these twin traps becomes Gawain himself. Allegedly, the primary objective of the Green Knight’s spectacle is to frighten Guinevere to death, according to Morgan Le Faye’s orders, but the Green Knight never seems to have intended the queen to be his bargain-mate — Guinevere’s fright requires she act as a witness and not a participant. When Gawain rises to take the deal in Arthur’s place, the Green Knight appears to be quite pleased: “quoþ þe grene knyȝt, ‘Sir Gawan, me lykes / Þat I schal fange at þy fust þat I haf frayst here’” (390-391), or ‘said the green knight, Sir Gawain, I am pleased that I shall take at your hand that (which) I have sought here.’ Andrew and Waldron further note that in the line before and the stanzas following, the Green Knight’s addresses to Gawain bear “a suggestion of special stress on *þou.*”[30] The Green Knight changes targets, then, and refocuses his orders to frighten Guinevere to favor his desire to bargain with Gawain.

Medieval hunting terminology was very precise, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* redeploys that precision: the poem pays a great deal of attention to the details in the hunting scenes, and the first sequence, the flaying of the hart, is the most detailed of all — encompassing an entire stanza with bob-and-wheel.[31] I found the following lines of this lengthy passage to be of particular interest: "þay [...] þe bowelez out token, / Lystily for laucyng þe lere of þe knot" (1333), "Alle þe rymez by þe rybbez radly þay lauce" (1342), and "Bi þe byȝt al of þe byȝes / Þe lapez þay lauce bihynde" (1347-1348). Roughly modernized, the lines detail the loosening of flesh, pellicles/membranes, and skin from the deer as the huntsmen break down the corpse.[32] Note the repetition of the specific terminology "lauce" and "laucyng." The terms are variant formulations of the verb *losen*, which can mean to 'detach' or 'loosen (skin),' while in the gerund *laucing* or *losing* signifies the '[u]ntying of knots, [or] bonds.'[33] The word appears three times in less than twenty lines, throughout this first — and lengthiest — skinning sequence, a passage that begins only thirteen lines after Gawain has accepted Lady Bertilak's first kiss.[34] The close proximity of the sequences, the interlacing of hunting and bedroom, has previously been read as an indicator of thematic connection. However, as I mention above, scholars often see that connection as one-way: how the hunting scenes allegorize the courtly test ongoing in the bedroom.

A notable exception to this trend is Dorothy Yamamoto, who examines the hunting scenes as the main interpretive focus of the poem. However, she demurs from claiming any "specific symbolic connection between Gawain and the hunted animals," even while she arguably reveals those very connections. She acknowledges that the bedroom and hunting

scenes are "intimately interlinked" and cites the brief transitions (often only one sentence connecting the different scenes with a conjunction) as emphasizing the parallels between them: "'While *this* is going on here, *that* is going on there,' the poet insists."[35] By the third hunt, Yamamoto claims, "the enchainment itself becomes a part of the fiction." The story absorbs this interlacement into the narrative as the text moves from fox-chase, to bedroom scene, to fox-capture as a natural progression. However, Yamamoto immediately draws away from any concrete connections and ultimately reinforces the idea that hunting was a celebration of human exceptionalism, or something for the inscription of "human sovereignty upon the bodies of the not-human" even while "its discourse rested upon a forgetting of the fact that humans are bodies, too."[36] She cautiously concedes that, when the third hunt transitions from the last bedroom scene to the capture of the fox, the return acts as a closing of a loop or "hiatus" through which Gawain "just *might* have slipped."[37] However, calling the bedroom scene a "hiatus" implies a complete break, a full stop in the narrative for an unrelated interlude before the story picks back up again. This implication almost contradicts her earlier observation of the "intimate" nature of the sequences' interlacement. Instead of parallels that weave together to supplement the internal world of the narrative itself, calling the final bedroom scene a break from the final hunting scene reinforces the perceived divide between them and negates both the textual and symbolic connections that the romance so carefully crafts. Even while Yamamoto draws back from such conclusions, her analysis highlights and reinforces the self-consciously interwoven nature of the scenes, and the poem invites those very connections.

But to what end do those persistent connections draw? I suggest that the interlaced relationship between the courtly and hunting sequences implies that Gawain himself, like the animals in the hunt, is also *lauced* of his hide. While Bertilak hunts and dresses game in the woods, his wife fulfills the 'craftsman' role in Gawain's bedroom and prepares the game for skinning. The Green Knight states that he had sent Lady Bertilak to "asay" Gawain (2362), just as the hart in the first hunt was "asay[ed]" prior to its cleaning (1328). Typically, scholars have read this term as meaning a courtly test, as "asay" can be defined as a testing of troth.[38] However, the term also has meaning in hunting ritual: Marvin's analysis of medieval hunting practices states that "the *asay* is a test or trial initiating the English dismemberment ritual, in which the hunter cuts into the deer's brisket to adjudge its quality by measuring how much 'grease' (i.e. fat) it has under the hide."[39] Considering again the text's precise hunting terminology and procedure, Marvin's definition fits neatly with the poem's overall preoccupation. These bedroom encounters, then, can be read as not only a courtly test but also an investigation of Gawain's subdermal features. In the final bedroom encounter, Lady Bertilak teases Gawain about having a lover, one to whom his pledge is "'festned so harde / Þat yow *lausen* ne lyst'" (1783-1784, emphasis added), or 'fastened so hard that you desire not to loosen (it)'. Gawain's supposed reluctance to be *lausen* from his love relates this scene to the flaying of the hunted animals — particularly that of the deer — threading this final bedroom encounter back to that first hunting sequence. That the text tellingly employs hunting terminology in Lady Bertilak's dialogue further presents Gawain as skinnable, and it offers a strong invitation to read these scenes through the lens of the hunting sequences rather than the other way around. Moreover,

Gawain lies naked in his bed here, having already stripped for bed the previous night.[40] Bare to Lady Bertilak's "asay" of his body, Gawain faces the threat of being *lauced*, just as the animals' skins are *lauced* from them by Bertilak in the forest. It is significant that the poem formulates Gawain's courtly test in hunting etiquette: Bertilak acts as the mastermind supervising the hunt and *asay* of Gawain's chivalric identity. And yet the repetition of this hunting terminology highlights Gawain's position as game to be skinned as much as knight to be tested.

When Gawain finally meets the Green Knight at the Chapel, the text draws attention to his flesh being torn: the Green Knight "lyftes lyȝtly his lome and let hit doun fayre / With þe barbe of þe bitte bi þe bare nek" (2309-2310), or 'quickly lifts his weapon and lets it travel down with the cutting edge of the blow by the bare neck.' The text fixates on the "barbe of þe bitte" upon Gawain's "bare nek," emphasizing the image of a sharp edge sliding through exposed flesh that was so vividly articulated in the deer's skinning: "Syþen þay *slyt þe slot*, sesed þe erber, / Schauved wyth a *scharp knyf*, [...] / Þen scher þay out þe schulderez with her *scharp knyuez*" (1331-1337, emphases added), or 'then they slit the throat, seized the gullet, scraped (it) with a sharp knife … then they cut out the shoulders with their sharp knives.'[41] The romance describes Gawain's neck as vulnerable and naked as that of any hunter's prey and portrays the shearing of his hide in a similar fashion to that of the deer. In fact, the text does not stop at the cut, but lingers to describe the damage to Gawain's skin: the axe "snyrt hym on þat on syde, þat seuered þe hyde. / Þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þurȝ þe schyre grece" (2312-2313), or 'snicked him on that side, which severed the hide/skin; the sharp (blade) sank into the flesh through the shining grease.' The

barb cuts into Gawain's "hyde," rupturing his "flesche" like the knives did the hunted animals in the previous passus. In fact, the only other time the romance employs the term *hyde* is in that first hunt, when the hunters "rent of þe hyde" or 'tore off the hide' of the hart (1331). The poem's limited use of the word draws attention to its presence in these two passages, both of which entail the rending or separating of skin from the body. The hart's "rent of [...] hyde" prefaces Gawain's own "seuered [...] hyde" and creates a reference point for the latter to gesture back toward and bring forward — Gawain's "hyde" is like that of the hart: cut open upon capture.

Similarly, the poem only sparingly uses the term *grece*. Meaning '[r]endered or melted fat,' the word can refer to either human or nonhuman animal fat.[42] This term appears in the first hunting sequence's skinning of the deer — they "Gedered þe grattest of gres þat þer were" (1326), or 'gathered the fattest of grease that was there' — and again when Bertilak presents the hart's hide to Gawain, as per their bargain — he "Schewez hym þe schyree grece schorne vpon rybbes" (1378), or 'shows him the bright grease cut upon the ribs.' Note that when Bertilak shows Gawain the "schyree grece" of the deer's hide, the text uses the same terminology in describing Gawain's own cut: "schyre grece." The text draws more parallels between nonhuman animal and human skinning, this time via the shared process of cutting the hide's "grease." And so, Gawain's body — his very skin — is akin to that of the animals' in the hunt, as the chasing and cleaning scenes interlace with the bedroom scenes in a woven pattern of *lauced* skin.

However, Bertilak's ability to hunt and trap and *lauce* Gawain seems rooted in the knowledge that he *can* — he refutes human exceptionalism by pursuing human prey.

However, the Green Knight himself does not seem exceptional. The term *grece*, used previously in the deer's and Gawain's skinning sequences, appears in only one other instance in the text — at the Green Knight's beheading: "[...] þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones / And schrank þurȝ þe schyre grece and schade hit in twynne" (424-425), or 'the sharp (blade) sundered the warrior's bones and sank through the bright grease and severed it in two.' Once more, we see the cutting of "schyre grece." Moreover, Gawain's later cut echoes almost verbatim this earlier line's overall phrasing: "Þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þurȝ þe schyre grece" (2313), or 'the sharp (blade) sank into the flesh through the bright grease.' Even the Green Knight's recovery from his beheading aligns him with the animals of hunting ritual: the broken-down bodies could be reformed again through the hunter's will.[43] And so the Green Knight, unmade by his beheading, is made whole yet again to appear later as Bertilak. While the Green Knight can — and does — hunt human prey in the form of Gawain, so too is the Green Knight himself susceptible to being hunted in turn.

The Bargains Fulfilled: Flesh Paid for Flesh

While I read the Green Knight's re-making into Bertilak as aligning the hunter/Green Knight with his prey/Gawain, others, such as Yamamoto, interpret it as setting the Green Knight further apart from Gawain: despite his fantastic bodily presence, the Green Knight, unlike other animals, *can* put his head back on his shoulders after its removal. For Yamamoto, this ability removes the Green Knight from the bodily realm occupied by everyone else, as he "pens humans and [nonhuman] animals together in a

common mortality." As Gawain cannot similarly un-wound himself, Yamamoto says, the detailed hunting sequences "raise the stakes" by revealing what is in store for Gawain.[44] I argue, however, Gawain *does* remake his *lauced* hide — through the infamous green girdle.

When speaking of *lauced* skin, one cannot ignore the other infamous *lace* of the poem.[45] The girdle has proven difficult to interpret, as scholars variously attribute it geopolitical, sexual, magical, chivalric, and/or feminizing signification. While these interpretations are all valid within their own readings, I would suggest an alternative. The green girdle is undoubtedly the primary focus of the Green Chapel confrontation: knowingly and unknowingly, both Gawain and the Green Knight seek to close their second bargain through the girdle. While Gawain has received the answering "dint" (389) or blow that completes his first deal with the Green Knight, their other *game* remains unconcluded: Gawain has yet to surrender his prize from Lady Bertilak (the belt she gave him), and Bertilak's final hunted quarry is not yet surrendered to Gawain (Gawain's own hide). The romance ties up the first of these loose ends after Gawain receives his stroke from the Green Knight's axe: soon after the Green Knight nicks Gawain's neck, he reveals the subterfuge behind his bargains. He even claims the green girdle as his own: he tells Gawain, "'hit is my wede þat þou werez, þat ilke wouen girdel. / Myn owen wyf hit þe weued'" (2358-2359), or 'it is my garment that you wear, that same woven girdle; my own wife weaved it.' Bertilak then reveals that he had sent his wife "to asay" Gawain (2362) and reinforces his ownership of the girdle: the belt belongs to Bertilak not only in origin but now also through their exchange bargain as Gawain's prize to surrender. In response, Gawain throws the girdle away from himself — "Þenne he kaȝt to þe knot and þe kest lawsez, / Brayde

broþely þe belt to þe burne seluen" (2376-2377), or 'then he seized the knot and loosened the girdle/missile, violently flung the belt to the man himself.' Gawain has finally fulfilled his end of their bargain: he has given to Bertilak what he won in Hautdesert.

But Gawain not only returns an illicit gift: he also surrenders the girdle as his own skinned hide. The above "lawsez" is a formulation of *lauces* from the verb *losen* — with all that that implies.[46] By removing the girdle, Gawain *lauces* himself of the garment. And once this prize is handed over, Bertilak promptly returns it to Gawain as promised in their agreement. This exchange is the natural progression of their hunting bargain, and it has been read variously as such. For one, Geraldine Heng observes that the Green Knight's return of the girdle evokes Bertilak's hunting bargain and his previously surrendered prizes. She asserts that the return "surreptitiously reconstructs the girdle as merely another of his trophies to give away, a prize, this time from a manhunt."[47] Heng reads this move as the Green Knight's taking control back from Lady Bertilak: his hunting bargain with Gawain takes primacy over the Lady's "subtle hunt" of the knight and demotes her to a supervised minion.[48] However, I interpret this self-conscious insertion of the hunting exchange not to be metaphorical but literal. This sequence of surrender and return is necessary for the fulfillment of their second bargain: having now successfully hunted Gawain, Bertilak owes the knight the prize *he* has won in the woods — the hide skinned from his prey. As with the boar in the second hunt, Gawain is *unlaced*. While the skinning and breaking scene with the boar is comparatively brief — only about 10 lines (not even half the length of the deer-skinning sequence) — it nonetheless opens with a craftsman beginning "[t]o vnlace þis bor" (1606) or 'to unlace this boar.' Much like the term *losen*, *vnlacen* is a hunting term

for cutting or flaying game, and likewise means to "loosen" or "unfasten."[49] The similarity of being "unlaced" of hide to being "unlaced" of the girdle itself is an aural slippage that invites parallels between the actions. And, in this climactic scene, Gawain's literal surrender of the garment acts as a symbolic dressing of game and renders Gawain as complicit in his own skinning.[50] Assayed and hunted by Bertilak, the knight must literally and figuratively *unlace* himself, loosening the girdle but also rending off his hide.

Unlike the other hunting prizes Gawain receives from Bertilak, Gawain wears the girdle — the representation of his skinned hide and, by extension, animal identity — atop his armor, "Abelef, as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde, / Loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace, with a knot" (2486-2487), or "slantwise, as a baldric, bound by his side, the lace fastened under his left arm with a knot.' Gawain also wore the girdle when he left Hautdesert for the Green Chapel earlier that day, dressing in the garment last and placing it atop all of his armor: "Þe gordel of þe grene silke [...] / Vpon þat ryol red cloþe, þat ryche watz to shewe" (2035-2036), or 'the girdle of green silk ... that was ornately shown upon that splendid red cloth.' His garb before and after his encounter at the Green Chapel places the lace, an unmissable slash of green against the "red cloþe" of his surcoat, as part of his identity. Gawain's armor absorbs the girdle as a signifier: rather than showcasing his chivalric (and human) identity, Gawain stripes his distinctive arms with the skinned hide of his animality. But more than that, Gawain conflates his ruptured skin with the girdle. The text makes a point to indicate both that the wound is healed and that Gawain nonetheless covers it: "Þe hurt watz hole þat he hade hent in his nek / And þe blykkande belt he bere þeraboute" (2484-2485), or 'the hurt was whole that he had torn in his neck,

and he bore the shining belt therabout.' Gawain's torn hide has been made "w/hole" again, but he still obscures the mark with the girdle by wearing it laced "þeraboute" the scar on his neck. When Gawain tells his peers about his adventure, he "þe lace hondeled" (2505), or 'handled the lace,' before ambiguously identifying "þe brende" (2506) or 'the brand' from his adventure at the Green Chapel. His immediate fiddling with the girdle seems to indicate that it may be the line's subject, and several scholars have interpreted the line as such.[51] However, I suggest that the line likely refers to the scar that the baldric covers — thus his need to "hondel" it, to move it aside and reveal the mark it obscures. The pseudo-hide of the girdle covers the site of rupture in Gawain's flesh, creating an illusion of unmarred hide: he obscures the scar and its implications of animal unmaking beneath the cloth itself, hiding it from view beneath the lace.

Nevertheless, just as in the reformation fiction of the hunting ritual wherein hunters ritualistically remade the broken-down body of the prey animal into an illusion of a reconstituted body, Gawain's own cut skin is reconstructed.[52] While Gawain's neck has literally remade itself through the healed scarring, the girdle enacts the ritualistic reformation of his ruptured hide. The lord of this hunt, the Green Knight, returns the girdle to Gawain and bids him wear it: "Þenk vpon þis ilke þrepe þer þou forth þryngez / Among prynces of prys, and þis a pure token / Of þe chaunce of þe Grene Chapel at ceualrous knyȝtez" (2396-2399), 'think upon this same contest when you pass forth among esteemed princes and this, a pure token of the adventure of the Green Chapel among chivalrous knights.' He urges Gawain to remember the girdle, to use it as "a pure token" of their encounter at the Chapel. On the one hand, Gawain is to show and speak of their hunter-

and-hunted relationship, and so visually and narratively interlace his identity with that of the Green Knight as both hunted animal and hunter of men. On the other hand, the Green Knight has enacted his part in the remaking ritual by replacing the skinned hide so the animal can be reformed as whole. The girdle is necessary for Gawain not only as the mark of his skinned animality but also as his returned, reconstituted hide.

Traumatic Echoes: Gawain's Ritual Re-Skinning

Even while Gawain wears his skinned hide atop his clothing and armor, he identifies his adventure as a chivalric failure: he reframes its new truth in a familiar context that he, like his peers, better understands. When urged to take the girdle by the Green Knight, Gawain laments that he will do so, but only as "syngne for [his] surfet" (2433) or 'symbol of his misdeed':

> 'When I ride in renoun remorde to myseluen
> Þe faut and þe fayntyse of þe flesche crabbed,
> How tender hit is to entyse teches of fylþe.
> And þus, quen pryde schal me pryk for prowes of armes,
> Þe loke to þis luf-lace schal leþe my hert.' (2434-2438)

Gawain bemoans that he rides in "remorde" (2434), or 'lament,' with the "crabbed" (2435) or 'perverse' deceitfulness that enticed him to "fylþe" (2436) or 'filth' now leaving him chastised by "quen pryde" (2437), so that the "luf-lace" (2438) or girdle will 'leþe (2438) or 'humble' his heart. The Green Knight exhorts Gawain to remember the girdle, and Gawain will do so. However, Gawain will not recall it as a "pure token / [...] of þe Grene Chapel" (2398-2399) as Bertilak asks him to, but as his own "token of vntrawþe" (2509), or token of dishonor. It reminds him of a chivalric failure, of his "couardise and couetyse"

(2508) or 'cowardice and avarice.' Gawain, faced with the inexplicable truth of the Green Knight's human hunting, transmutes the meaning into a more familiar mode. He cannot see Lady Bertilak as a huntress' assaying him, but he can conceive of a seductress' tempting him, and so he rants against traditional temptresses of old (2409-2428). Neither can he see himself or the Green Knight as human hunters or human prey, but he can imagine a failed trial of his own courtly merit (2429-2438). Even so, Gawain's emotional outburst and subsequent shame appear somewhat out of proportion to his perceived crime, as Michael Foley asserts: Gawain's guilt rests in merely "cheating in a *layk* or game. His honor as a gentleman is slightly besmirched, but his soul is *clene.*"[53] Gawain's strong reaction, Foley comments, betrays an "excessive remorse" and a "tendency to exaggerate."[54] In Foley's reading, Gawain does not seem to grasp that even in a chivalric context his fault is minor and forgivable. What Gawain perceives has happened is disconnected from how he has responded to it, and he cannot properly express the source of his overblown response.

Gawain's apparent inability to express or understand his encounter(s) with the Green Knight fits well into the context of suffered trauma. In her explication of trauma theory, Cathy Caruth examines Freud's concept of *latency*, which she defines as "the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent":

> The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can hence never be fully known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself. The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all.[55]

Gawain's inability to express his trauma, here read as the revelation of the human as (prey) animal, can be explained by the concept of traumatic latency: because Gawain cannot consciously recall, cannot grasp and express the new truth he learns, his reactions manifest as a traumatic deferral. He "forgets" the reality of the hunt in order to cope with it and transfers an inconceivable experience into an alternate reality that he *can* express. However, as Caruth suggests, it is only by "forgetting" the trauma that one can experience it through its repetition, and for Gawain, the pseudo-forgetting precedes his own repetition of the trauma — his wearing of the girdle.

By its very nature, trauma is not a single event but the "way that its very unassimilated nature — the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance — returns to haunt the survivor later on."[56] Caruth explains the phenomenon of "traumatic repetition": the unknowable, inexpressible nature of trauma requires repetition, recurring echoes of the original trauma — echoes that are not precisely the same as the initial event.[57] For Gawain, his inexpressible trauma echoes in his ritualistic re- and unlacing of the girdle as he wears and removes it every day. He cannot fully know his trauma, and his attempts to reconcile his worldview with this new truth lead to his displacing the trauma onto a chivalric context. And so, the trauma must repeat.

And repeat the trauma he does: Gawain wears the girdle as his reminder, presumably never to be seen without it. The implication, then, is that each morning Gawain will tie the girdle "Abelef, as a bauderyk" (2486) over his scar and each evening he will *vnlace* the girdle from himself yet again. Viewing the repeated tying and untying through the lens of the hunt, Gawain's wearing of the girdle fits beautifully into the ritualistic

skinning of the animal and ritualistic remaking of the animal again, in hunting tradition, but in reverse. Each day, Gawain ties on the girdle and reforms his cut hide, and then he *laucens* himself when he removes the girdle again: he performs the reconstitution hunting ritual each morning only to skin himself of his hide at the day's end. Gawain thus unconsciously enacts his own traumatic echoes as he relives his encounter with the Green Knight and endures his self-skinning again and again. While he cannot express or comprehend his trauma, Gawain will continue to execute it almost precisely as it had first occurred.

Similarly, the other knights of the Round Table cannot conceive of the truth Gawain learns either, and they instead wear their own baldrics for the honor and renown of the Round Table. They remain ignorant of the baldric's true meaning as a signifier for their very skin, laced and unlaced over and over, but they, too, enact Gawain's traumatic repetitions: "Vche burne of þe broþerhede, a bauderyk schulde haue / A bende abelef hym aboute, of a bryȝt grene" (2515-2516), or 'each man of the brotherhood should have a baldric of bright green, an ornament diagonally about him.' In their imitation, they surround Gawain with the visual echo of his skinned and reformed hide: their lacing and unlacing of their own green laces mimic Gawain's ritualistic remaking/unmaking. Gawain faces from all sides the reminders of the Green Knight's hunt and lives encompassed by the echoes of his own skinning. The poem more or less ends with that image[58]: the romance's final glimpse of Arthur's young court is one of green baldrics across every chest, a misreading that continuously propagates a signifier of the human as skinned prey.

Each of the Round Table knights, in wearing the girdle-as-hide, implicitly participates in the hunt. Bertilak admits to Gawain that Morgan le Faye devised the Green Knight's disruption of and gruesome decapitation at King Arthur's feast in order frighten Guinevere to death and "*to assay*" the reputation of the Round Table (2457, emphasis added). By wearing the pseudo-hides, the knights are not only mimicking Gawain's skinning but also suggesting their own. The Round Table knights, hunted and assayed by the Green Knight, unknowingly enact their own metaphorical skinning on a daily basis.

Mistress of the Game: *Gawain's* Female Frame in the Context of the Hunt

The human-hunting in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* reveals an intricate hierarchy of roles in the narrative: the women of the piece participate in this hunting scheme right alongside their male counterparts and perpetuate the paradigm of human as hunted. Typically, the lord's role in a hunt is to oversee the skinning of the game,[59] and as we have seen it is a role Bertilak fills in the poem's main hunting sequences. Bertilak's compulsive need to display ownership (*my wede*, *myn owen wyf*, *my goune* [2358, 2359, 2396]) can be read as an extension and emphasis of that supervisory position in Gawain's hunt as well.

Bertilak controls, supervises, and participates in that hunt as he does the ones in the woods. And yet, Bertilak's cutting of Gawain's neck at the chapel, wherein he nicked Gawain's flesh to expose the grease, removes him from the supervisory role that is his by right of status. He no longer oversees the skinning but performs it by slicing Gawain's neck. Even before this confrontation, however, Bertilak acts more as a huntsman or hound

for his wife as he flushes Gawain out and then chases him to ground by arranging the scenario with his and Gawain's exchange bargain: now that she has securely 'captured' him in his bedroom, Lady Bertilak comes to *asay* Gawain and to test his *grece* prior to skinning.

And yet the Lady herself becomes a huntsman when penetrating the "cortyn" of the bedchamber: she "[k]est vp þe cortyn and creped withinne"(1192), or 'cast up the curtain and crept within' on the first day and "commes to þe cortyn and at þe knyȝt totes" (1476), or 'comes to the curtain and at the knight's toes' on the second. Her breach of this external barrier reads as complete by the third night: "Þe lady luflych com, laȝande swete, / Felle ouer his fayre face and fetly hym kyssed" (1757-1758), or 'the lovely lady came, laughing sweetly, (and) dropped over his fair face and kissed him prettily.' The text makes no mention of the curtain on the third night, the opportunity for a third repetition noticeably absent after the previous two depictions. The Lady has successfully removed that obstacle: she has cut away that barrier to reach the intimate, internal realm of Gawain's bed. She has, one could say, skinned him of that protective layer. And so, instead of once more penetrating through the curtain to reach the knight, Lady Bertilak cuts straight to kissing Gawain's "fayre face" (1758) the third day. The Lady herself employs hunting terminology when she teases Gawain about having a lover, one to whom his pledge is '"festned so harde / Þat yow *lausen* ne lyst'" (1783-1784, emphasis added), as we saw earlier. The text not only shows Gawain to be as vulnerable to being *lauced* as the animals in Bertilak's forests but also reveals how Lady Bertilak is testing him, much like the animals are tested: Gawain's exposure before the lady, and the romance's interwoven terminology between

hunting and bedroom scenes, implicate the Lady in the 'craftsman' role of the hunt just as it does Gawain the prey of it. Lady Bertilak *asays* him, testing to see if he can or will *lausen* himself, which Gawain does later at the Green Chapel.

But even so, the text identifies Lady Bertilak, hunter as she acts here, through her own hide. The text introduces her via a twist on that courtly trope of fairness: "Ho watz þe fayrest in felle, of flesche and of lyre" (945), or 'she was the fairest in skin, of flesh and of face.' The text characterizes her first emergence onto the scene not only by her beauty (a common introduction in romance), but it also insists on keeping her skin at the forefront during her entrance: she is fair *in felle* and *of flesche* and *of lyre* — her skin, her flesh, her face. The text falls back on this identifier when it reintroduces Lady Bertilak upon her first excursion into Gawain's bedchamber: it focuses on the complexion and shape of her "chynne," "cheke," and "lyppez" (1204-1207), or 'chin,' 'cheek,' and 'lips,' and reminds the reader of her fleshly body even as she acts as huntsman. The circling attention on flesh serves to highlight the dermal, in the composition of the Lady's identity.

However, neither Lady Bertilak nor Bertilak himself skins Gawain: their *asay* of Gawain's *grece* is typically a pre-skinning act by the craftsmen of the hunt. Instead, in that episode of pseudo-skinning, it is Gawain who violently removes the girdle soon after his *asay*. If we read this passage as Gawain's performing his own skinning, then we can do the same for Lady Bertilak in the final bedroom scene: "Ho laȝt a lace lyȝtly þat leke vmbe hir sydez / [...] / And ho bere on hym þe belt" (1830-1860). The diction here implies a somewhat violent action — she 'quickly seizes the belt around her sides' and, once Gawain agrees to accept it, 'thrusts the girdle upon him.'[60] The swift seizure and aggressive passing

off of the belt echo in Gawain's own pseudo-skinning later on, when he, too, roughly seizes the girdle and throws it from himself.

Lady Bertilak *unlaces* herself in this scene in a near-perfect parallel to how Gawain unlaces himself at the Chapel. She then presents her love-gift to Gawain, not unlike how Bertilak presents his freshly hunted skins to Gawain during their *game*. This additional layer of signification and pointing accentuates the parallels between the bedroom scenes and the hunting scenes, as the playful exchange of courtly banter mirrors the chivalric exchange in the knights' *games*. The interlaced hunting scenes do not merely underscore Lady Bertilak's amorous pursuit, but rather the infamous bedroom scenes function as extensions of the more literal hunting of Gawain himself. Lady Bertilak is not just a love-hunter, but a craftsman of the hunt, as she skins away Gawain's external layers to *asay* him. And yet, she also *unlaces* herself of her hide in a similar game of courtly exchange.[61] Once more hunter and hunted, skinner and skinned, are interchangeable. Bertilak, his wife, and Gawain all act at various points as huntsmen and prey, quarry and craftsmen. Who, then, is overseeing this hunt?

As the instigator of the narrative events, Morgan le Faye best fills the role of hunt supervisor. We are told that Morgan devised the whole ordeal in order frighten Guinevere to death and *asay* the Round Table (2457). Fully exploring this framing of the poem, Heng describes *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as the "theater of its feminine figures" who drive the narrative forward with their own motivations and schemes.[62] It is not so surprising, then, that the Green Knight disavows his authority and defers to Morgan le Faye, to whom he is "a servant, and Morgan's obedient creature."[63] Elsewhere in this

chapter, I read the Green Knight's deferment of authority in the light of the poem's hunting theme: the Green Knight's retraction of his power serves to push the supervisory authority for all the hunts onto Morgan le Faye, who had initially sent him as her obedient hound to pursue her original quarry, Guinevere.

Male or female, human or nonhuman animal, no one is exempt from the hunt. Morgan's initial and eventual prey are even side-by-side at the feast as Guinevere sits next to Gawain, the chivalric exemplar of the Round Table.[64] The text notes this positioning of Morgan's primary prey and the Green Knight's eventual (perhaps intended?) quarry not once, but twice: first, when Guinevere enters the hall and sits at the dais ("gode Gawan watz grayþed Gwenore bisyde" [109], or 'good Gawain was seated beside Guinevere'), and then again when Gawain rises to take the Green Knight's challenge ("Gawan, þat sate bi þe quene" [339], or 'Gawain, who sat by the queen'). Most tellingly, this second instance attributes Gawain's juxtaposition with Guinevere as part of his identifying features — he is Gawain, who sat by the queen — as though such a detail were necessary to help identify this famous knight.

But Guinevere's role in the hunt stretches past merely that of prey. The text carefully connects the queen to Lady Bertilak, as Heng observes: the former replaces the latter at Gawain's side at the Hautdesert feasting (1003) and as the text's illustrious beauty (947). Of note in Heng's analysis is the emphasis on physical bodies: "the Lady's bodily beauty is caught and communicated through the body of Guinevere's name, itself the embodiment of beauty in the Arthurian universe."[65] If we accept that the two women are physically interchangeable in this way and that Guinevere's embodiment of beauty

translates to Lady Bertilak, then we can also claim that there occurs an equal and opposite transfer from Lady Bertilak to Guinevere. After all, Lady Bertilak's skin-centered introduction in the text doubles as the moment she replaces Guinevere as the text's beauty icon. Their connection implies a progression from Guinevere/prey to Lady Bertilak/hunter, reinforcing the poem's recurrent shifting roles of hunter/hunted.

Using this concept of substitution, we can see the poem shift its focus from clothing to flesh (and for Gawain, back to clothing) as identifiers, as the romance transmutes the former into a version of the latter. Guinevere's initial introduction focuses on her garments:

> Whene Guenore ful gay grayþed in þe myddes,
> Dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute:
> Smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer
> Of tryed tolouse, of tars tapites innoghe
> Þat were enbrawded and beten wyth þe best gemmes
> Þat myȝt be preued of prys with penyes to bye
> In daye. (74-80)

The text ignores the traditional focus on the lady's face, complexion, or general physical appearance altogether. Instead, the poem introduces Guinevere by her lavish clothing, "dubbed al aboute" (75) with silks and rich fabrics, delicately "embrawded" (78) or embroidered and studded with precious gems. The queen's entrance into the poem is not unlike the Lady Bertilak's, as the text fixates on one facet of her beauty to articulate the whole. However, that fixation transfers from Guinevere's dress to Lady Bertilak's flesh. If Lady Bertilak does replace Guinevere as the poem's model of beauty, then so does flesh replace clothing as a primary signifier both of beauty and identity — a transference that the poem reverses again when Gawain uses the girdle to remake his torn flesh and relies on the *lace* to reform his cut hide.

Just as the romance connects Lady Bertilak and Guinevere, so too does it connect Lady Bertilak and Morgan le Faye. Heng asserts that Morgan le Faye and Lady Bertilak are "twinned" in their descriptions, that they function as "nonidentical doubles" and each constitutes "the other's reference."[66] The lady cannot be properly formulated without the hag, and their first appearance serves as the clearest moment of this connection. While the poem introduces Lady Bertilak by the beauty of her flesh, it sets Morgan le Faye as both her contrast and her transition from Guinevere. The romance describes Morgan le Faye as having "rugh runlked chekez þat oþer on rolled / [...] þe blake broȝes, / Þe tweyne yȝen and þe nase, þe naked lyppez" (953-962), or 'rough wrinkled cheeks that rolled over each other … the black brows, the two eyes and the nose, the naked lips'. The text lingers on Morgan's "soure" (963) or 'disgusting' face, her "ȝolȝe" or sallow flesh (951), and her "schort and þik" body (966) in an interwoven contrast to Lady Bertilak's own fair face with "Hir brest and hir bryȝt þrote, *bare displayed*" (955, emphasis added), or 'her breast and her white throat, bare displayed.' I find it significant that while the text briefly notes that Lady Beritlak wears clothing — "Riche red on þat on rayled ayquere, / [...] / Kerchoves of þat on wyth mony cler perlez" (952-954), or 'rich red on that one (was) arrayed everywhere … kerchiefs of that one with many clear pearls' — the text nonetheless returns to her explicitly bare skin as her primary identifier. However, Morgan le Faye's description, which also focuses on her fleshly qualities, splits itself between her "naked" face and her heavily wrapped body: Morgan is thoroughly covered, "gered ouer" (957), "Chymbled ouer" (958), and "enfoubled ayquere" (959), or 'clothed over,' 'muffled up,' and 'swathed everywhere,' with veils and embroidered cloth, so that "noȝt watz bare" (960), or 'nothing

was bare,' but her "soure" or 'disgusting' features (963). And yet even these covers do not hide her physical form — her "body [...] schort and þik, / Hir buttokez balȝ and brode" (966-967), or her 'body … short and thick, her buttocks bulging and broad,' remain clearly discernible. Morgan le Faye hovers between Lady Bertilak's bared flesh and Guinevere's extravagant dress, as the text simultaneously covers over and exposes her body. She acts as a thematic bridge between the two courtly women, a hunter aligned in flesh and hide with both her craftsmen and her prey.

However, the text also connects Morgan le Faye to the Green Knight beyond the use of her crafts to create his magical disguise. When he interrupts Arthur's feast as the romance's start, the Green Knight's body is mistaken *for* clothing: as Suzanne Craymer argues, the later description of the Green Knight's "fannand fax" (181) and "much berd" (182) or fanned-out hair and large beard covering his shoulders and chest contradicts the initial description of his "mantile" (153) does the same, conflating body and cloth.[67] This is not to say the Green Knight was not wearing a cloak, but rather the cloth and the hair are interchangeable to the audience within the text. The Green Knight's disguise, Craymer also argues, hinges on the green hue of his flesh to keep him unrecognizable to Gawain, when, later, the text uses similar terms to describe both the Green Knight and Bertilak, such as their broad beards (182, 845), apparent mature age (280, 844), and tall, powerful legs (139, 846).[68] Yet the Green Knight's disguised-and-disguising skin melts into his distinctive clothing: his hair and his mantle elide into a single, interchangeable feature of his appearance.[69] The initial ambiguity of body/cloth in the Knight's appearance prefaces Morgan le Faye's own exposed-but-clothed introduction, as the clothing of both does little

to obscure their bodies. Both characters also present parallel images of a thick, blocky figure: the text describes Morgan as "schort and þik" upon her first appearance (966) and the Green Knight similarly as "so sware and so þik" (138) — even the Green Knight's horse is "gret and þikke" (175). Morgan le Faye thematically aligns not only with Lady Bertilak (huntsman) and Guinevere (prey) but also the Green Knight (hunter/prey). She possesses the potential to be any and all of them — both skinner and skinned, swathed and bared — but does not step out into either position because of her own role as "Morgne þe goddes" (2452). The Green Knight portrays Morgan as a suprahuman figure who, while engaged in human matters, remains above them in some way. She is therefore participatory in the hunt, yet also supervisory to it.

In this overarching scheme, Morgan le Faye acts as the overseer of the hunt, Bertilak and his wife her hunters and hounds, and Guinevere and the Round Table her quarry. In fact, Morgan le Faye's hunting position in the poem remains exclusively that of overseer: she sends her hounds and hunters out after her prey without slipping into their roles. The Green Knight tells Gawain of Morgan le Faye's plot, how "þe goddes" (2452) had sent him "to assay þe surquidré" and "þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table" (2457, 2458), or 'to asay the pride and the great renown of the Round Table.' He utilizes the exact same terms as he had in his interruption of Arthur's feast: "Where is now your *sourquydrye* and your conquestes, / [...] / Now is þe reuel and *þe renoun of þe Rounde* Table / Ouerwalt wyth a worde of one wyȝes speche" (311-314, emphasis added), or 'where is your pride and your conquests now … now is the revel and the renown of the Round Table overthrown with a word from one man's speech.' The Green Knight not only denies his control of the

hunt but, in his very disavowal of it, he disowns even his own speech from the very start of the poem (and, by extension, the *game* itself). They are Morgan's words — her orders, not his own will. The romance, then, presents its very narrative as a sort of hunting manual: launched and overseen by Morgan Le Faye, all the figures within, both human and nonhuman animal, participate in the rituals and processes of the hunt, and the text renders all as animals vulnerable to slipping into the role of hunted prey.

Conclusion

Morgan le Faye's potential to be skinned presents itself in her initial appearance, in her parallels to the flesh-focused craftsman, Lady Bertilak, and the clothed prey, Guinevere, but she herself is not hunted or skinned. She orders the *asay* of her quarry and, even as the text presents her potential to be skinned, it forecloses that potential with her silent, supervisory position. As Heng indicates, Morgan le Faye's unspoken desires push the poem's characters into articulated motion.[70] However, Morgan le Faye herself never speaks, and neither skins nor is skinned. Her "koyntyse of clergye" (2447), shared with and demonstrated through Bertilak and his *games*, may just be the simple truth that humans are much like the deer, the boar, and the fox: animals. Whether characterized by courtly behavior, chivalric status, or gender, the narrative's persistent interlacing of hunting language and ritual imply that true human identity may not be so exceptional after all.

[1] "The Most Dangerous Game" is a reference to Richard Connell's short story, also published as "The Hounds of Zaroff"; in it, one General Zaroff has become dissatisfied with hunting more ordinary game and seeks the thrill of "'a quarry with which I can match my wits'"; see *Colliers Magazine*, January 19, 1924.

[2] Sir Thomas Wyatt, "They Flee From Me," *Poetry Foundation* (2016), ll. 1-4.
[3] All primary text citations refer to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, in *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (Exeter, UK: Exeter University Press, 2010). Modernizations of the Middle English rely on rely on the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*), last modified February 2016, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/. Sections of this chapter are based on my materials and research from "Like a Second Skin: Appropriation and (Mis)interpretation of Identity in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *William of Palerne*," in *Writing on Skin in the Age of Chaucer*, eds. Nicole Nyffenegger and Katrin Rupp. Forthcoming with De Gruyter, Spring 2018.
[4] Gregory W. Gross, "Secret Rules: Sex, Confession, and Truth in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," *Arthuriana* 4, no. 2 (1994): 167.
[5] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 101, 107.
[6] Norman Simms, "Yep, Slime, and the Green Girdle," in *Sir Gawain and the Knight of the Green Chapel* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 2002), 286-287.
[7] Here, too, I utilize the constructions 'human and nonhuman animal' or 'human and other animals' to avoid framing my argument around the "human" as separate from the "animal" in general. When referring to specific kinds of nonhuman animals (such as, in this case, 'game animals' or 'animals from Bertilak's hunt'), I drop the adjective 'nonhuman' as an unnecessary additional modifier.
[8] For more, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (1936; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 59, 79; and Oliva Blanchette, "Aquinas' Conception of the Great Chain of Being: A More Considered Reply to Lovejoy," in *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages*, eds. Kent Emery, Jr., Russell L. Friedman, and Andreas Speer (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 185.
[9] Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book II (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, ltd., 1923); and Saint Thomas Aquinas and Beradus Bonjoannes's *Compendium of the Summa Theologica of St. Aquinas: Pars Prima* (London: Thomas Baker, 1906).
[10] Edward, Second Duke of York, *The Master of Game*, eds. Wm. A. and F. Baillie-Grohman (London: Chatto & Windus, 1909), 4.
[11] See *Polycraticus,* in *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers*, trans. Joseph Pike (Minneapolis, 1938), 16, and Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly,* trans. Betty Radice (Harmondsworth, 1993), 60-61, quoted in William Marvin, "Blood, Law, and Venery," in *Hunting Law and Ritual in Medieval English Literature* (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 134.
[12] Marvin, "Blood, Law, and Venery," 141.
[13] Ibid., 154
[14] Edward, *The Master of Game*, 177.
[15] For more on the widespread trope of an "intruder at the feast," see Aisling Byrne, "The Intruder at the Feast: Negotiation Boundaries in Medieval Insular Romance," in *Arthurian Literature XXVII*, eds. Elizabeth Archibald and David F. Johnson, 33-58 (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2010).
[16] The sword and spurs were the "indispensable features of a knight's equipment" and "symbols of knighthood." In fact, the climax of the ceremonial investing of a knight was the donning of sword and spurs, just as their removal acted as a symbolic degradation of the knight in the 1590 *The Booke of Honor and Armes*. See Irving Linn, "The Arming of Sir Thopas," *Modern Language Notes* 51, no. 5 (1936): 310.
[17] Ewart Oakeshott, *A Knight and his Horse*, 2nd ed. (Chester Springs, PA: Dufour Editions, 1998), 12, 119; and R. H. C. Davis, *The Medieval Warhorse: Origin, Development and Redevelopment* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1989), 67.
[18] Davis, *The Medieval Warhorse*, 67.
[19] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 213n160.
[20] Ibid. For more on hunting as a sporting endeavor, see Joyce Salisbury's *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
[21] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 248n1106-7; 309. While this gloss is possible, the 'misfortune' meaning is not attributed to this passage in the *MED*, but rather to a line more than 1,000 lines later, when Gawain thinks on the chapel: "Þis is a chapel of meschaunce, þat chekke hit bytyde!" (2195), or 'this is a chapel of

doom, that (or what) misfortune befalls it;' here, this definition is very appropriate. See *MED*, s.v. "chē̆k (interj. & n.)."
[22] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 249n1108-9; 350.
[23] Ibid., 249n1108-9; 330, 331.
[24] Ibid., 248n1106-7.
[25] The definition of *swap* as the noun 'a blow' first appears in *Cleanness*; *MED*, s.v. "swap (n.)" and s.v. "swappen (v.)."
[26] This line of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is the only time editors *swap* have glossed it as 'strike a bargain, make an agreement'; *MED*, s.v. "swappen (v.)." By the late fifteenth century, the gerund form *swapping* meant exclusively 'striking, beating,' removing any concept of a deal from the definition altogether; *MED*, s.v. "swapping (ger.)."
[27] The term *lere* is a very flexible one. While Andrew and Waldron have pinned it down to *lur*, meaning 'loss,' they have also glossed *lere* variously as 'ligature' from *lere, n.* (during the skinning of the deer [1334]); 'flesh' from *lere, lyre, n.* (when the Green Knight bares his neck for Gawain's strike [418]), and 'teach' from *lere, v.* (in *Cleanness*); *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 330, 331.
[28] *MED*, s.v. "līre n."
[29] The term *lymp* is often glossed as 'to befall' or 'experience,' but can also mean 'to belong, pertain'; *MED*, s.v. "limpen (v.(1))."
[30] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 222n389.
[31] For perspective here: the deer is skinned in roughly 31 lines (1325-1361); the boar, approximately 13 lines (1605-1618); the fox is not shown skinned at all (1900ff). Foxes, however, were considered a type of vermin, and its skinning procedures were not strictly ritualized; see Dorothy Yamamoto, "Bodies in the Hunt," in *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 113, 127.
[32] The modernized lines in full read, "Carefully loosening for the ligature of the knot" (1333); "All the membranes on the ribs they quickly loosen" (1341); and "they loosen the skin folds" (1350).
[33] *MED*, s.v. "losen (v.)" and s.v. "lō̤sing(e (ger.(2))."
[34] The Lady kisses Gawain (1305-136), then she leaves and Gawain rises, dressing for mass (1307-11) and partaking of the holiday celebrations (1312-1319) before the text moves straight into Bertilak's hunt.
[35] Yamamoto, "Bodies in the Hunt," 129.
[36] Ibid., 130.
[37] Ibid., emphasis retained.
[38] More specifically, both the noun and verb forms of the word hold the primary definition of a testing of 'the quality of (materials)' — 'as of a metal or other object' — and secondarily as a test of 'character or qualities of (a person)' or their 'personal traits,' and thirdly as a martial test of 'arms, combat' or '(one's strength) in combat'; *MED*, s.v. "assai (n.)" and s.v. "assaien (v.)"
[39] Marvin, "Blood, Law, and Venery," 148, emphasis retained.
[40] The Cotton Nero MS even bears an illustration of one of the bedroom scenes (fol. 125r of London, British Library MS Cotton Nero A.x): Gawain, wrapped in a green blanket but with his shoulders and upper chest exposed, lies on a red bed as Lady Bertilak toys with his chin or beard. A dark-inked dot rests on Gawain's chest that could be an accidental mark or a nipple. Using this picture in my analysis would be problematic, but it serves as an example of contemporary interpretation: even the manuscript drafters, who mocked up where the illustration would go, and/or the illustrator themselves read Gawain as exceedingly vulnerable in this sequence.
[41] The romance even calls the axe "þe scharp yrne" or the sharp iron when Gawain flinches from the blow (2267).
[42] *MED*, s.v. "grēs(e (n.)."
[43] Edward, *The Master of Game*, 100; Yamamoto, "Bodies in the Hunt," 111.
[44] Ibid., 130.
[45] In fact, the poem insists on referring to the garment as a *lace*. More specifically, it does so on eight separate occasions (1830, 1851, 1874, 2030, 2438, 2487, 2497, & 2505). The word is heavily reminiscent of the hunting term *lauce*, a correlation only reinforced by the usage of *brayden*, meaning both to 'pull tight' or

'draw out (bowels, etc)' and also 'embroidered […] ornamented, adorned'; *MED*, s.v. "breiden (v.(1))." *Brayden* appears roughly a dozen times in the poem, and in addition to drawing swords and general lifting, the text uses the word to refer to blood gushing at the Green Knight's beheading ("Þe blod brayd fro þe body" [429]); breaking down the deer in its skinning scene ("Siþen britned þay þe brest and brayden hit in twynne" [1339]); disemboweling the boar in the second skinning sequence ("Braydez out þe bowels" [1609]); the girdle when first described in the bedroom scene ("Noȝt bot arounde brayden" [1833]) and again when Gawain rips the girdle off at the Green Chapel ("Þenne he kaȝt to þe knot and þe kest lawsez, / Brayde broþely þe belt to þe burne seluen" [2376-2377]). That both the girdle and the skinning sequences are linked even further through this linguistic repetition only serves to reinforce the connection between *lace* and *hyde*.

[46] *MED*, s.v. "losen (v.)."

[47] Heng, "Feminine Knots," 508.

[48] Ibid.

[49] *MED*, s.v. "unlāsen (v.)."

[50] Similarly, the Lady Bertilak "laȝt a lace lyȝtly" (1830), or 'quickly seized that lace,' when giving it to Gawain, foreshadowing Gawain's later "kaȝt to þe knot" (2377), or 'seized the knot.' While two distinct verbs are utilized (and they rhyme very neatly), the basic definitions and gestures implied are strikingly similar. The verb *lacchen* means not only 'to seize' but also indicates an 'arrest' or the more violent animal trapping or capture; see *MED*, s.v. "lacchen (v.(1))." Similarly, Gawain's later *kaȝt* bears the simple definition of 'To grasp (sth.), seize' but also a 'secondary, and again more violent, definition of 'to catch (an animal in the chase, with a snare or trap, etc.); entrap (sb.)'; see *MED*, s.v. "cacchen (v.)." The connotations of capture, specifically *animal* and presumably nonhuman capture, in these definitions are certainly telling.

[51] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 299n2506-9.

[52] Yamamoto, "Bodies in the Hunt," 111.

[53] Michael Foley, "Gawain's Two Confessions Reconsidered," *The Chaucer Review* 9, no. 1 (1974): 76.

[54] Ibid., 77.

[55] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 17.

[56] Ibid., 4, emphasis retained.

[57] Ibid., 101, 107.

[58] After, of course, the standard references to the old "bokez" and call for God's blessing (2524-2531).

[59] Marvin, "Blood, Law, and Venery," 148.

[60] The text's use of "Laȝt [...] lyȝtly" (modernized: seized quickly) implies the second definition of the verb "lacchen": 'To seize (sb. or sth.) *quickly* or violently, snatch; seize (sb. or sth.) as prey'; *MED*, s.v. "lacchen (v.(1))," emphasis added. However, as seen above, the first definition is no less violent than the second. And so when the Lady "bere on" Gawain the girdle, while it can be read as the more sedate 'offer (sth.) to (sb.),' the preceding context of swift removal would imply instead 'to thrust (sth.) upon (sb.)'; *MED*, s.v. "bēren (v.(1))."

[61] For more on the medieval animalization of women, see Joyce Salisbury's *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994) and *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London: Verso, 1991); Caroline Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

[62] Heng, "Feminine Knots," 501.

[63] Ibid., 508.

[64] For more on Gawain's reputation in the Arthurian tradition, see Sean Pollack, "Border States: Parody, Sovereignty, and Hybrid Identity in 'The Carle of Carlisle,'" *Arthuriana* 19, no. 2 (2009); and Kristin Bovaird-Abbo, "Alison's Antithesis in *The Marriage of Sir Gawain,*" *Medieval Feminist Forum* 49, no. 2 (2013).

[65] Heng, "Feminine Knots," 502.

[66] Ibid., 503.

[67] See Larry Benson, *Art and Tradition in* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1965), esp. 62, and Suzanne Craymer, "Signifying Chivalric Identities: Armor and Clothing in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Medieval Perspectives* 14, no. 1 (1999): esp. 56-57.

[68] Ibid., 50.
[69] This conflation also appears in the final hunt for the fox, wherein the hunters "tyruen of his cote" (1921), or strip him of his coat. The term *cote* typically indicates a 'tunic or kyrtle,' or other 'outer covering,' and less often can be 'the coat or pelt of an animal'; *MED*, s.v. "cōte (n.(2))." The text playfully refers to the fox's pelt as his garment, even as the hunters strip it from his body. And the audience, through the hunters' unmaking of the fox, supposedly glimpses a soul beneath the skin: "Hit watz þe myriest mute þat euer men herde, / Þe rich rurd þat þer watz raysed for Renaude saule" (1915-1916), or 'it was the merriest baying (of hounds) that ever man heard, the rich roar that was raised for Reynard's soul there.' After his capture, the baying hounds create a roar or 'song' to send off the fox's soul; *MED*, s.v. "rērd(e (n.)." However, considering the plethora of insults hurled at the fox during the hunt, it it more than likely, as Yamamoto observes, serves to highlight the very absence of said soul; Yamamoto, "Bodies in the Hunt," 129. For more on the potential soul of nonhuman animals in romance, see chapter one of this project.
[70] Heng, "Feminine Knots," 503.

Chapter 3. Hiding Skin and Skinning Hides: Transformation and the Vulnerability of Species Categories in *William of Palerne*

> Et ut omnem abstergeret dubietatem, pede quasi pro manu fungens, pellem totam a capite lupæ retrahens, usque ad umbilicum replicavit: et statim expressa forma vetulæ cujusdam apparuit.
>
> ["To remove all doubt he pulled all the skin off the she-wolf from the head down to the navel, folding it back with his paw as if it were a hand. And immediately the shape of an old woman, clear to be seen, appeared."]
>
> - Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographia Hibernica*[1]

When William and Meliors resolve to flee Rome in *William of Palerne*, they turn to the crafty handmaiden Alisaundrine for "cunseile" (1661).[2] Alisaundrine's response is at first disheartening: she says that the lovers will be hunted until all roads — "eche brug, eche paþþe, eche brode weye" (1674), or each bridge, each path, each broad way — are unsafe to travel. However, Alisaundrine soon touches upon an idea just outlandish enough to work: in the kitchens men are skinning wild beasts, and Alisaundrine proposes that they steal two bear skins to sew the lovers into as a perfect disguise. Thus is hatched the plan to sew the lovers into "tvo skynnes / of þe breme beres" — two skins of the fierce bears — so they may escape Melior's unwanted marriage (1688-1689). William and Meliors cross the countryside disguised first as bears and then as deer, chased by hunters and Roman forces along the way. A "witty werwolf" aids them on their journey, the same werewolf who had saved William as a small child, and guides them to William's ancestral home of

Palerne only to find it besieged by the Spanish. Once William saves Palerne from the siege, the defeated King of Spain reveals that William's friendly werewolf is the lost Spanish prince, Alphouns, whom the king's second wife, Braunde, had transformed via an ointment rubbed into his skin. When Braunde restores him to human form, Alphouns then relates his rescue of William, the lost heir of Palerne. With both princes returned to their respective kingdoms, they marry worthy maidens (William weds Meliors and matches Alphouns to William's sister), and everyone lives happily thereafter.

With so many important animal skins in the romance, Alisaundrine's plot well represents the romance's concern with disguise, and especially the use of nonhuman animal hides to obscure human identity. As I noted in my previous chapter, medieval hunting tradition highly ritualized the process of skinning animals, more for hunted prey than for butchered chattel. The practice involved precise vocabulary and correct use of terminology. Skinning served as the focal point of a hunter's endeavors: a hunt's power resided in the "transformative moment of [...] unmaking" that skinning represented.[3] Skin itself is no less powerful in *William of Palerne*: for this romance, skin acts as a site of transformation, as permeable and potent. The role of skin in medieval writing, as Sara Kay observes, served both as a medium of writing (vellum) and as the subject of writing (werewolf tales, bestiaries, etc.). Manuscripts that bear a "suture" in their vellum visually emphasize that dual function, Kay argues, and reassume the significance of skin when flesh appears in a text.[4] Nonhuman animal hides carry meaning assumable by human speakers or human bodies, and skin represents a metonymy not only for the body, but also for the self.[5] In this way, skin functions as a transferable component: one type of skin connects to another and

creates ambiguity in signification. The medieval Latin word *pellis* refers to both human and nonhuman skin as well as to parchment. The sutures in the manuscript of a romance, then, act as a physical counterpart in the writing surface of the sutures that, in *William of Palerne*, Alisaundrine sews into the bearskins within the romance narrative. The hides of the lovers' disguise counterpoint the hide of the vellum, and the nonhuman *pellis* of the manuscript page dovetails into the human *pellis* of the hand that holds it. Skin is universal, yet transmutable: human and nonhuman animal skins, vellum, books – it remains skin even while it inhabits various forms or serves various functions.[6]

William of Palerne treats skin as almost interchangeable, particularly the skin one owns and the hides one wears. The romance showcases several disguises that render boundaries ambiguous, from the lovers' skins to Alisaundrine's infamously wearing of "boiȝes cloþes" (1705), or boys' clothes, to the transfigured Alphouns's wolfish shape. I've already discussed the prevailing distinction in medieval thought that humans were, by definition, *the* "rational animal."[7] That definition as the singular divide breaks down when applied to certain romances, I argued in Chapter 1, and it does so yet again in *William of Palerne*.[8] While the medieval paradigm of human definition, known as the Great Chain of Being, presents a multitude of difference, it nonetheless implies a hierarchy of animals, atop which sits the human.[9] Medieval attempts to further define the human result in additional defining features (physical characteristics, clothing, diet, etc.)[10] that continuously qualify the definition of man with these other signifiers and underpins itself with a binary opposition of human/nonhuman animal. When *William of Palerne* questions definitions of the human, it also deconstructs this binary opposition by complicating what

signifies human and nonhuman animal.

The romance *William of Palerne* resists presenting a primary distinction between human and other animals and instead confuses those categories — hide or skin, beast or knight, prey or person — and refuses to settle on a single, clear divide. Skin is worn as clothing, hides are sewn together and cut away, flesh is shaped and altered and cleansed. The interchangeability of these skins leaves open and vulnerable what defines a shape, a flesh, and an identity as human and another as nonhuman animal. Instead, the romance depicts the status of human and other animals as interchangeable: it presents skin as a flexible category that encompasses and reinscribes the human into the animal category. After all, Alisaundrine chooses bearskins both for the bear's ferocity and for its close approximation to man, when she remarks that bears in "alle maners arn man likkest" (1694) — that is, not merely in shape or size do bears resemble humans, but in *alle maners*. In fact, while editors most commonly gloss the term *likkest* as 'similar' or 'most like,' it also means 'same' or 'identical.'[11] The term implies that the two creatures, humans and bears, are so similar as to be nearly identical in form and manner. Medieval thought supports the implication, as bears and humans were believed to possess the same internal organ arrangements, to perform intercourse in the same manner (i.e., in an embrace, with one partner lying atop the other), and were thought even be able to successfully crossbreed.[12] The bear and the human share a multitude of physical similarities, with any single division elided into the overriding likeness of the two species.

However, the romance goes farther than offering brief references to prevailing medieval thought: it places the human *within* the category of animal, rendering the single

distinction of human rationality into variegated differences among animal species. Courtly romances are spaces of fantasy, and readers of romance are conditioned to expect wonders and magic and are willing to suspend their disbelief accordingly.[13] The poem's undermining of the strict hierarchy of species, then, remains always and already within the world of fantasy. Yet even so, romance's magical aspects, conventional though they may be, do not automatically nullify its engagement with contemporary definitions of the human and the nonhuman animal. If anything, it utilizes anticipated generic features as a means to question such definitions.[14] For instance, *William of Palerne* relies on the romance genre's comedic elements, or what Geraldine Heng identifies as romance's "healing and aggressive properties," to dilute its potentially subversive species ambiguity.[15] While Heng was referring to Richard I's jokes in *Richard Coer de Lyon* as a mechanism by which to alleviate and transform cultural trauma into national pride, *William of Palerne*'s comedic elements operate to "make the transgression of taboos acceptable, narratable."[16] To examine the romance's conflation of human/nonhuman animal categories, this chapter first examines how *William of Palerne* depicts humans as becoming Other, revealing the permeability of human boundaries even as it utilizes the romance genre's space of play and comedic elements to normalize the subversion of divine human exceptionalism. Secondly, this chapter investigates how the romance complicates its transformations by leaking the nonhuman animal into the 'restored' human. Doing so undermines the 'rational' as an exclusively human definition and emphasizes instead the "wild space of play" between species. Through Alisaundrine, Alphouns, and William and Meliors, the romance relies on

disguise and transformation to confuse and ultimately break down that singular division of nonhuman and human animal.

The Gendered Disguise: Swaggering like a Man

This romance has an alternate title, *William and the Werewolf*, so editors clearly find the subject of transformation to be an integral part of the romance. One transformation in the romance, and a less obvious one it seems than that of the infamous werewolf, is that of the helpful handmaid Alisaundrine. The French *Guillaume de Palerne* passes quickly over Alisaundrine's disguise — which the romance gives only a half-line — while the Middle English *William of Palerne* expands the half-line into a full description.[17] For the Middle English poem, then, Alisaundrine's pseudo-shape-shifting warranted more attention. In fact, Alisaundrine's transformation establishes the pattern for the other transformations in the poem, mainly the pseudo-comedic transformation between human and nonhuman animal. In her efforts to secure the lovers their bearskin disguises, Alisaundrine herself must become something else — a man:

> Wiȝtly, boute mo wordes, sche went forþ stille,
> and blive in a bourde borwed boiȝes cloþes,
> and talliche hire atyred tiȝtli þerinne;
> and bogeysliche as a boye busked to þe kychene,
> þer as burnes were busy bestes to hulde,
> and manly sche melled hire þo men forto help,
> til sche say tidi time hire prey for to take.
> Sche awayted wel þe bere-skinnes,
> þat loveli were and large to lappen inne hire frendes;
> and went wiȝtly awei, wel unparceyved (1704-1713).

The text is rife with masculine plays on words. It touches on the correctness of Alisaundrine's disguise, noting she put on the clothing "talliche" (1706), or 'properly, suitably, [...] in a fitting manner.'[18] But Alisaundrine does more than dress in the garments of a boy — she puts on a male swagger, walking "bogeysliche" (1707), or 'haughtily, saucily,' about the kitchen.[19] She even enters and exits the kitchens "wiȝtly" (1704, 1713), 'quickly' or, even, 'like a man,'[20] and works "manli" (1709) — 'in a masculine way' — alongside the men in the kitchen.[21] It is not enough for her to look the part, but she must also walk the walk, so to speak. And walk the walk she does: Alisaundrine struts around the skinning workroom and waits for her moment to snatch the bearskins. She "melled" (1709) with the men, a term that means either 'blended' or 'exerted, busied oneself.'[22] While *melled* may simply mean that Alisaundrine is 'speaking' with the men, as Hannah Priest argues, the full line ("and manly sche melled hire þo men forto help" [1709]) implies that she applies herself to "help" (1709) the men in their work — "busy" as they are the "bestes to huld" (1710), or to skin the beasts. Nonetheless, all three definitions may likely be at play: in blending with the men at work, Alisaundrine converses with them and exerts herself in the masculine tasks at hand.[23] In other words, Alisaundrine successfully transforms herself from female to male: she engages in the bloody work of the skinning, speaks with the workmen, and blends in perfectly in the masculine space. She dresses and conducts herself so convincingly as a boy that her presence among the men goes entirely unnoticed: she "went wiȝtly awei, wel unparceyved" (1713) — departing quickly (or, again, as a man), entirely unperceived. Alisaundrine has passed herself off as a male without a hitch, more or less transforming herself from female to male.

However, one must remember that Alisaundrine's gender-shifting was not very subversive for the fourteenth century, as cross-dressing women were a common joke in medieval English tournament games.[24] In fact, the text uses the term "bourde" (1705) — meaning 'game,' 'joke,' or 'prank'[25] — to describe Alisaundrine's quick acquisition of "boiȝes cloþes" (1705) for her ruse. The Middle Ages had precedents for such a game, and some scholars read Alisaundrine's cross-dressing as ultimately non-threatening because, as Priest argues, Alisaundrine's disguise fails to convince the audience, who is "in on the joke."[26] Extrapolating from that *bourde*, Priest reads all of the text's transformations as "ironic," more "a masked dance or a mumming" than real shape-changing: "this is pure performance," she continues, "and none of it is permanent."[27]

Although, humor and irony do not necessarily negate the transformative aspects of the poem: the *bourde* merely participates in the romance genre's space of play, a space enables romance in general and *William of Palerne* in particular to employ the "healing and aggressive properties" of humor: "The joke taps conventions of humor," Heng says, "that make the transgression of taboos acceptable, narratable."[28] The text defers Alisaundrine's potential transgression of gender boundaries through the humor of her disguise, through her exaggerated strut and her transformative *bourde*. Even as the romance depicts the vulnerability of boundaries, the text keeps the potentially threatening conflation of man and not-man safely within the realm of playful humor. Alisaundrine participates in a familiar tournament game, an elaborate prank on one of the main antagonists in the narrative, even as she slides freely between one human category and another.

While Alisaundrine's mischievous boundary-crossing may be more anthropocentric than the other boundary-crossings I will discuss, her transformation nonetheless bears the same elements of playful disguise that recur in different formulations with different characters in the poem. Alisaundrine's transformation across genders facilitates a similar slide from the carapace of one being into another — into an Other — creature entirely. After all, genderbending and cross-species transformations, Valerie Hotchkiss notes, breach both social norms and biology.[29] And, from the twelfth century onwards, visual and literary representations of women increasingly connected them to those of nonhuman animals and the line between female and nonhuman animal became progressively narrower and less clear.[30] By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as Joyce Salisbury notes, this perceived "interchangeable nature" of women and nonhuman animals transitioned from comparisons through simile to more direct metaphor. The transition illustrates, Salisbury continues, "a blurring of the lines between [...] a different species, and all women," such that the two categories were increasingly conflated.[31] Even Alisaundrine's *manli* behavior recalls the underlying edge of her disguise: editors often gloss the term *manli* as 'masculine, male' but it also means 'in the human way' or having the 'characteristics of human beings.'[32] Alisaundrine's disguise, then, represents not only a transformation from one gender to another but also implies the transformation of one species to another — from nonhuman animal to man. Her pseudo-shape-changing, then, fits right alongside the others at play in the romance and sets the tone for how the poem depicts and normalizes transformation across species boundaries.

The Rational Wolf: A Man in Wolf's Clothing

Alisaundrine's costuming also prefaces her act of disguising the lovers, and the text presents even the witty werewolf Alphouns, the most dramatically shapeshifted figure of the romance, more as forcibly-disguised than as entirely transformed. In fact, many scholars argue that the Middle English romance's recurring depictions of disguise imply that Alphouns may have never physically or fully transformed at all.[33] Others interpret Alphouns as a hybrid entity, as Randy Schiff does, and read the werewolf's participation in human rationality and practices as a "[nonhuman] animal literally gesturing toward human status."[34] However, this ambiguity of form seems to be the whole point of the romance, as the ambiguity illustrates the confusion of physical and rational boundaries between traditional human and nonhuman animal definitions that Alphouns represents. Alphouns functions as a human in nonhuman animal form: the text makes it very clear that Alphouns changes physically, as I will show shortly, even while it insists on his rational mind. And if rationality defines the human as distinct from other animals, then Alphouns's conflation of human reason and nonhuman animal shape serves to interrogate that definition and, by extension, its inherent human exceptionalism. To fully explore this slide between the human and nonhuman, I address Alphouns's physical transformation and rational mind, as well as his performance of traditional werewolf violence and his human moments of genuine savagery.

The romance provides little room for doubt that Alphouns experiences a bodily transformation. His stepmother Braunde transforms Alphouns as a part of her plot to disinherit him so that her own children may succeed to the Spanish throne. Her plan hinges

on transforming Alphouns through "nigramauncy" (119) and "wicchecraft" (118, 120), or necromancy and witchcraft, by rubbing into his flesh "[a] noynement" made by "enchaunmens of charmes" (136-137), or an ointment made by enchantments of charms[35]:

> [...] whan þat womman þerwiþ hadde þat worli child
> ones wel anoynted, þe child wel al abowte,
> he wex to a werwolf wiȝtly þerafter,
> al þe making of man so mysse hadde ȝhe schaped.
> Ac his witt welt he after as wel as tofore,
> but lelly oþer likenes þat longeþ to mankynne,
> but a wilde werwolf, ne walt he never after. (138-144)

Braunde "wel anoynted [...] wel al abowte" (139), or thoroughly anointed (Alphouns) all over, such that he "wex to a werwolf" (140), or grew into a werewolf. However, while his body is "so mysse [...] schaped" (141), or so shaped askew, he retains his intelligence "as wel as tofore" (142), or as well as before his transformation: it is his only "likenes [...] to mankynne" (143), or similarity to mankind, and Alphouns is otherwise entirely a "wilde werwolf" (144), or wild werewolf. Rather than the more traditional mode of lycanthropy (the wearing of a wolf's pelt, which emphasizes putting on the skin of a separate creature entirely),[36] Alphonse transforms through his own flesh, and the text emphasizes how thoroughly that flesh must be covered — "*wel* anoynted [...] *wel* al abowte" (139, emphasis added) — to enact this transformation. Yet only his body is "mysse [...] schaped" (141), and his human reason persists as if he were still in human shape and serves as the only human trait he has left.[37] Alphouns's nonhuman animal status, then, seems questionable despite his skewed body: he is as rational in this shape as he was in his previous shape, a nonhuman animal with the traditionally human capacity for thought.[38] The romance continues to insist on Alphouns's human mind by showing the wolf planning and cleverly

enacting his strategies at nearly every turn and reinforcing his recurring title, "þe witti werwolf." Even when Alphouns toes the line between savagery and rationality, the poem presents Alphouns as a disguised figure more than a transformed one and highlights the retention of his human intellect. But at the same time, it throws into question the very definition of that humanity.

Indeed, the text depicts Alphouns as not only a rational creature, but also as an atypical werewolf: wolves (and by extension werewolves) were known in the Middle Ages as evil, murderous beasts.[39] Instead, Alphouns participates in the small "Werewolf Renaissance" of twelfth-century literature, wherein transformed werewolves are rendered as sympathetic characters.[40] However, the text pushes his portrayal even further: he is not merely rational but rather parodic in his overall lack of viciousness. Whenever Alphouns displays a traditional werewolf persona, he does so almost always as an act. Let us focus on the three main examples of these performances. The first and second occur nearly consecutively, when the hapless lovers require food and drink and the lupine prince mock-attacks travelers in order to steal their foodstuffs. First, Alphouns charges at a man "wiþ a rude roring, as he him rende wold" (1851), or with a ferocious roaring as though he would tear him (apart) and frightens the man into dropping his bag of food and fleeing. Alphouns is "glad" of the victory (1860), and his wolfish ferocity immediately dissipates: cheerfully, he takes up the booty and brings it to the lovers before heading out again to find them wine.[41] Then, we find the second parody: Alphouns comes upon a clergyman, whom he ambushes "bellyng as a bole þat burnes wold spille" (1891), or roaring like a bull that would kill that man. Once more, the man drops his parcels (in this case, flagons of wine)

and flees, which the werewolf then happily takes to the lovers. On the third occasion, when hunters attack Alphouns while he tries to protect William and Meliors, he pretends to roar and rage: "wiȝtly as a wod best went hem aȝens / [...] / and ran forþ for al þat route wiþ so rude a noyse, / as he wold þat barn blive have forfrete" (2371-2376), or he went against them quickly like a wild/mad beast and ran forth at that entire group with such a ferocious noise (it was) as if he would have quickly devoured that child. In all of these episodes, the text exaggerates Alphouns's behavior and renders it in simile. He acts "as a wod best" and is "bellyng as a bole" — playing the wild beast and roaring like, of all things, a bull — as he pretends that he will "rende" and kill his targets. That is to say, the poem focuses on Alphouns' performance, not his shape. The repeated and insistent use of "as" to create a simile for Alphouns's behavior only places its performativity into sharper focus: he is not *actually* "a wod best" just as he is clearly not "a bole," but merely acting "as" one. Werewolf he may be, but Alphouns is no crazed, murdering beast. His antics are instead humorous, as he puts on a melodramatic show to frighten his victims. He seems less a werewolf in these moments and more an actor in costume.

Even when the text draws attention to Alphouns's wolf body, as it does in the final parodic-violence sequence, the performative presentation of his behavior undermines the potential threat. Alphouns gapes his mouth open "ful grimli" (2372) and seizes the child "be þe middel in his mouþe, þat muche was and large" (2374), and the text lingers on the image of his wide-open jaws, of his "large" mouth snatching up the child's torso. But Alphonse only pretends as though he will harm the child as he carries him off "*as* he wold þat barn blive have forfrete" (2376, emphasis added). The pretense behind his actions belies

the sudden playing up of his nonhuman animal body, and the romance dispels any doubts when Alphouns releases the child after the hunt: he sets the child down "wiþoute eny maner wem þe worse it to greve / for non schold in þat barnes bodi o brusure finde / as of þat bold best, but bold it was and faire" (2460-2462). The poem emphasizes that Alphouns returns the child entirely unharmed, assuring us that the wolf leaves no 'blemish or bruise' on his body despite the long chase for the "bold best" that stole him. But although the text refuses to allow Alphouns to be purely a nonhuman animal, it also does not allow the audience to forget his animality altogether. Even when he playacts the werewolf's murderous rampages, Alphouns is still very much a physical wolf. However, his lupine shape and bristling fur are superficial — only skin-deep so to speak — and do not affect his rational mind.

In fact, Alphouns's exaggerated performance of werewolf behaviors evokes the healing joke: he ambushes unsuspecting passersby with a great show of slavering jaws and bristling hackles and, as soon as they have fled, reverts to joy at his success, gladly serving his spoils to the hapless lovers. His escapades read like a prank, and the juxtaposition of overblown ferocity with celebratory glee only reinforce the absurdity of his performances. The text continually reassures readers that Alphouns is not 'that kind' of wolf: it depicts Alphouns instead as rather blatantly *playing* at those roles. In the scenes I discuss, Alphouns certainly performs what Priest calls "mumming," though his act owes less to his physical transformation and more to the violence culturally associated with his lupine body.[42] This playful joking at a savagery typically associated with nonhuman animals in medieval thought,[43] not only reinforces Alphouns's humanity, but pokes fun at his physical

lupine state: Alphouns bridges the human and nonhuman, but the humor of his play-acting eases the tension in that connection.

That is not to say that Alphouns is without violent outbursts, but even in moments of genuine ferocity, the text never questions Alphouns's humanity. For instance, when Alphouns returns to his ward to find the young William missing, the wolf prince goes wild, howling and ripping at his furred flesh in a great sorrow (86). Despite his violence in this scene, Alphouns rends his own hide as a man would tear at his hair in a traditionally human gesture of distress. In his acute *reuliche* or sorrow, Alphouns displays what Norman Hinton calls a "manlike 'dool.'"[44] Even in his two assaults on his stepmother Braunde, Alphouns exhibits the rational thinking and emotions contemporarily assigned to humans: in the first attack Alphouns reacts to his transformation by attempting to strangle Braunde to death (145-151), but even in this violence, he is not described as enraged: he merely plans to get whatever vengeance he can before being forced to flee, no matter the consequences (147-148). In the second attack (4341–4344), Alphouns merely glares angrily at Braunde (4338-4339) and his rage only spurs violent action after seeing Braunde sit happily with his father. Thomas Aquinas may have labelled nonhuman animals savage and violent, but he also allowed for the human capacity to descend into savagery and, so, to become bestial.[45] To distinguish the nonhuman animal from the human, then, Aquinas insists that humans possess a "logical violence" that has motives and goals, and so can be understandable or justified. By contrast he defined nonhuman animal violence, like the creatures themselves, via irrationality.[46]

Traditional romance tropes of vengeance justify Alphouns's violence in both

assaults, as Braunde had caused his forced transformation and subsequent loss of his royal inheritance: as Michelle Freeman identifies it, his is a "[r]ightful vengeance" characterized by "rightful *human* fury."[47] In fact, Alphouns's desire for vengeance is not only reasonable but also expected of him: medieval romance hosts an entire sub-genre of vengeance-driven tales, some which, like the thirteenth-century *Havelok* and *King Horn*, focus particularly on "the value of strong emotions in vengeance, specifically anger" when seeking often "violent retaliation."[48] Yet Alphouns can be appeased: the wolf's rage subsides as soon as William promises him that Braunde will either restore Alphouns or be burned alive for her failure (4363-4367): William offers Alphouns the violent retribution that the wolf sought through his attacks and answers Alphouns's romance drive for vengeance. In response, Alphouns is "ful glad of Williams speche" (4375) — he understands the knight's words and calms himself accordingly: Alphouns makes no further dispute and works "in alle wise" or all manners to do as William bids him with as gracious a bearing as he can (4378-4380). He goes so far as to bow and kiss William's feet in gratitude (4377). We thus see that Alphouns responds logically to William's words despite the fervor of his rage just before. Even with Alphouns at his most savage, his most wild, the text does not portray him as an irrational beast. Instead, the text's insistence on Alphouns's humanity implies an uncomfortable but not uncommon truth — that humans are as capable of violent outbursts as nonhuman animals. While this knowledge was not particularly revelatory in medieval thought, what renders it potentially uncomfortable for contemporary audiences is Alphouns's dual animal status: a rational werewolf who inhabits both human and wolf animal categories, Alphouns is literally a rational animal whose depiction implies that other

nonhuman animals may also be rational animals with traditionally human emotions and motivations.

However, while *William of Palerne* joins other medieval texts in its reminder of humans' base drives, it only partially does so with an injection of comedy. The text renders Alphouns's initial attack by depicting mixed human and nonhuman animal behaviors: rather than a wolf gripping Braunde in its jaws, Alphouns violently *hente* (a general grabbing verb) her with his paws in order to choke her.[49] He does not rend or tear at her with his teeth as a wolf might, but instead attempts to *strangle* her to death, like a human would. Alphouns's plan to eke out what revenge he can is rooted in his memory of his former human body and its capabilities. His very human attempt at murder while occupying a nonhuman body — strangling someone with paws that have no opposable thumbs — creates a ludicrous and anatomically challenging image.[50] Alphouns's attempted vengeance invites laughter and thus draws attention to his altered anatomy, despite the text's insistence on his human mind and motivations. The juxtaposition lends some humor to Alphouns's situation as a whole, as he hilariously fumbles his vengeance because of his lupine body, and the healing joke acts to render his circumstances — a rational mind in a nonhuman animal body — more acceptable.

The three sequences I describe serve as a sharp contrast to Alphouns's previous "mummings" of werewolf violence: whereas before the werewolf's savagery was prankish and playacting, here it is genuine and serious. There is little of the humor that previously mediated Alphouns's straddling of the human/nonhuman animal divide/hierarchy. Instead, the text depicts Alphouns exhibiting fits of dangerous aggression and interchanges the

comical *bourde* of his ambushes with the insistence on the human aspects of his overwhelming emotions. Alphouns still possesses a rational mind in a nonhuman animal body, but outside his hilariously fumbled attempt at vengeance early on, the text leaves the audience to imagine this conflation with little assistance of its previous humor that helped to make it "acceptable, narratable."[51] The parodic scenes are even nestled between Alphouns's wild outbursts, bookending the humorous episodes and emphasizing them as the heart of his werewolf portrayals. Alphouns' genuine violence frames his play-violence and swaddles the healing joke of man-pretending-to-be-wild with stark moments of man-being-wild.[52] While the comedy of his parodic antics colors the flanking drama of his rage and sorrow, the latter are nonetheless left bare of humor. The framing passages of genuine violence, then, remain outside of the acceptable, normalizing power of the joke. Without the mediating force of the romance's humor, the text reinforces its depiction of Alphouns not merely as a human-being-bestial but as a nonhuman animal possessing rational motivations.

William of Palerne not only depicts Alphouns as rational, but it also seems to willfully ignore Alphouns's human identity. The romance reveals Alphouns's transformation within the first 400 lines of the poem and so leaves his human identity as no secret.[53] However, while I have referred to Alphouns by name throughout this analysis, the text itself never refers to the him by name or title — or by any human moniker — but refers to him only in nonhuman animal terms like *werwolf* or *best* until after he returns to his original form.[54] But even as narrative apparently sets aside the knowledge of his identity, it cannot seem to completely forget it, as the romance reveals Alphouns's human

identity early in the narrative and depicts it as intrinsic to his behavior and portrayal. And yet the poem insists on Alphouns's wolfishness and abandons his established human identity in favor of presenting a rational, nonhuman animal. He is a wild wolf only in parody or passion, as feint or fervor. In these moments, Alphouns is seemingly wolf in shape alone and bears a human mind driven by both reason and emotion. Alphouns, then, presents a sort of conflation between the two categories of human and nonhuman animal, cohabitating both at once and belonging to neither. What makes him human — his rational mind — does not and cannot exempt him from being animal. And yet, even free of his quadrupedal form, Alphouns cannot fully escape his animal identity.

The Wolf Within: Clothes Cannot Make the Man

Alphouns cannot elude the shadow of his animality even after his stepmother Braunde returns him to his human shape as the lost Spanish prince. In fact, William himself still doubts his friend's restoration after Braunde — and the romance — insist upon it, as though William cannot conceive of Alphouns outside of his lupine identity. And yet, the narrative makes no secret that William should not be confused: William knows that Alphouns has been transformed, and accordingly treats the wolf as more human even before Braunde restores the Spanish prince to his bipedal shape. The King of Spain, after being captured by William when the siege is broken, reveals to our titular knight that he had a son named Alphouns (4085) who was transformed "into a wilde werwolf" by his second wife, Braunde (4105). Having seen the werewolf in Felice's court, the king also tells William that he knows for certain "þis werwolf is my sone" (4114). William agrees

with him and admits that he also knows for certain, as the werewolf "has mannes munde more þan we boþe" (4123), or has more a man's mind than both of us. In other words, William verbally acknowledges what the text always makes clear — that Alphouns has a "mannes munde" despite his lupine body. Indeed, William resolves to force Braunde to cure Alphouns if she can and states twice his wish for Alphouns to be made a "man aȝeine" (4131, 4137). The text leaves William's knowledge of Alphouns's plight without a doubt as it circles back to the knight's resolution to restore his friend to human form.

Nonetheless, William still struggles to reconcile his knowledge of Alphouns's curse with the physical body in front of him. Let us look again at William's appeal during Alphouns's rage: William pleads with Alphouns to trust him as his "owne broþer" (4360) or like a "fader to þe sone" (4361). He even refers to the Spanish king as "þi sire" (4368), or your father: William not only calls upon familial ties but also explicitly reminds the wolfen Alphouns of his *human* father. Knowing as he does that Alphouns is the transformed prince of Spain and that the wolf retains a man's mind, it makes sense that William relies on traditional human relationships to appeal to Alphouns and speaks to the wolf as he would if Alphouns were in a human body. Nonetheless, William cannot ignore Alphouns's shape as he holds him "aboute þe necke" (4358). And so, William begins to mix Alphouns's signifiers: he calls Alphouns "mi swete dere *best*" as easily as he calls him "mi lef swete *frend*" (4359, 4372, emphases added). This speech constitutes the first moment in which William calls Alphouns by a human referent. In all their time together, William never calls the werewolf *frend*, and even Meliors only calls Alphouns "oure worþi werwolf" (2795) and "our gode best" (2797). William's use of the term in this context,

then, seems to indicate that he here attempts to see his lupine companion as more than a nonhuman animal. Yet despite his invocation of human ties as he urges Alphouns to acquiesce as "þou me derli lovest" (4374), William cannot resist referring to Alphouns as a beast. William knows Alphouns's name and treats him as more human in this moment than he has in previous interactions, but still the knight cannot look entirely past Alphouns's physical shape. Knowing Alphouns's humanity is not enough, and for William, Alphouns remains a seemingly impossible anomaly — a rational mind in an inescapably nonhuman animal body.

However, even after Braunde restores Alphouns to his original shape by means of charms and reading, William's difficulty persists. He cannot extricate his werewolf companion from the Spanish heir even with Alphouns returned to human shape. And the text is thorough in presenting Alphouns as restored: Alphouns reacts to his restoration first by being "gretli glad" (4441) and, immediately after, with shame at his nakedness: "he was so naked sore he was aschamed" (4443), or he was so naked that he was intensely ashamed. This shame marks Alphouns as fully human and, in turn, as having *not* been so before. Among several features such as diet and language, medieval culture defined the monstrous races by the ability (or inability, as the case often was) to wear clothing.[55] Alphouns's sudden shame upon his reversion to humanity, then, serves as an indication that he has, supposedly, left his animality behind. His new clothes, as a defining human feature, signal his restored human status. Accordingly, the text renders Alphouns's acquisition of clothing with a great deal of attention: when Braunde informs William that Alphouns has requested clothing, William responds with both joy and also

great suspicion of the veracity of her claims: "'Is þat soþ,'" William asks, "'Cleymeþ he after cloþes, for Cristes love in heven? / Deceyve me nouȝt with þe dedes, but seie me þe soþe'" (4480–4482). William questions Braunde's claim that Alphouns asks for clothing and warns her not to deceive him but to tell the truth. William puts Braunde unnecessarily on the defensive, and twice invoking God (4483, 4484), she must reiterate that she has made Alphouns wholly human again, or made him as "'hol [...] in alle maneres as to man falles'" (4484–4485). Alphouns's request for clothes, then, serves as no minor detail: it indicates his human status, and as such the romance renders it highly important to the figures within the romance. They must confirm without a doubt such a significant indicator of humanity, and so the text lingers on the discussion and creates an almost comedic back-and-forth over an ordinary and, seemingly, trivial request.

During this episode, the text also lengthily notes how Braunde bathes and clothes Alphouns. The entire sequence, from when Alphouns first finds himself ashamed to when William finally provides him with clothing, spans roughly 55 lines of the poem, with the discussion of clothing making up the majority of the passage with nearly 40 lines of text.[56] Only after his private bath under Braunde's care does the matter of clothing arise. Yet despite his shame, Alphouns does not ask for clothing — Braunde must broach the subject, just as she offered him his bath when she initially saw his shame. If clothes act as a signifier of this return, then this mediation of them through Alphouns's original assailant, Braunde, befits his earlier curse: even restored "to man aȝe in maner as he ouȝt" (4256), or back to man in manner(s) as he ought to be, Alphouns is not yet fully human again until Braunde, who had "him wrouȝt a werwolf" (4135) in the first place, also guides him through the

symbolic restoration of his humanity. However, the nature of the passage's progression, with Braunde offering and then furnishing clothing for Alphouns, serves to stretch out the sequence, as the romance stubbornly lingers on each aspect of the prince's return to humanity. The poem's prolonged insistence points to a sense of anxiety, one that implies a fear that Alphouns's werewolf status constituted *monstrous* status: Alphouns's dressing in clothes references a contemporary discomfort in defining the middle-races between humans and other animals. Alphouns's ambiguity of species plays into this defining-the-monstrous conundrum and layers an anxious coloring onto his full return to humanity. And so, the text emphasizes that, more than his physical shape alone, human practices (re)define Alphouns as more than a 'savage animal.' In this manner, the text seems to highlight human exceptionalism by presenting the self-reflective customs of civilization as separating man from other animals or even man from the monstrous-middle. Man, aware of his nakedness, clothes himself. Alphouns, shamed by his nudity, dresses accordingly, and this developed sense of self-awareness renders him as human. However, the text immediately undermines this human exceptionalism by casting doubt on Alphouns's human identity.

Even after all this engagement in humanizing practices, William — and everyone with him, for that matter — does not recognize Alphouns when they first see the prince as a man: "of þat companie, be Crist, þer ne knew him none" (4505). To some degree, the romance trope of recognition tends to deploy this type of deferment — a delay through unrecognition to dramatize the moment of realization and reunion. However, we have already seen the poem's use of generic tropes building into its questioning of human/nonhuman animal definitions. And so, while the protracted sequence of recognition

fits romantic conventions, it also furthers a comedic purpose as William requires such extensive proof despite his own machinations to restore Alphouns. Again, William has no reason *not* to recognize Alphouns. He knows that Braunde has undone her curse and that Alphouns desires clothing. William even knew of Alphouns's condition while the Spanish prince was yet a wolf: he not only connects the Spanish king's lost heir to his lupine friend, but he also keeps Braunde in Felice's court in order to heal Alphouns: "'I sent after hire for þi sake,'" William tells Alphouns, "'to help þe of þi hele hastli, ȝif sche miȝt. / And sche has brouȝt now þi bote'" (4363-4365). William assures Alphouns of Braunde's *help, hele,* and *bote*, terms of healing and aid that reinforce our impression of William's knowledge of Alphouns's curse: William knows that Alphouns was "wrouȝt a werwolf" (4135) and so requires some manner of cure or remedy. And yet somehow, even after the restored Alphouns chastises William for his lackluster welcome, William must admit to Alphouns that he does not know who (or what) Alphouns is: "'I ne wot in þis world what þat ȝe are'" (4517). Despite William's having been led to this room expressly to meet his restored friend and even though sees "þe baþ" (4502) in which Alphouns has bathed, Alphouns's human shape still confuses William. Only when Alphouns directly states "'I am he, þe werwolf'" does William finally make the connection (4520). Alphouns must realign himself to his former shape for William, must cast backwards for a familiar signifier and reassociate his human body with its previous quadrupedal anatomy. Alphouns the man cannot exist without Alphouns the werewolf. The two have become inextricable from each other in the narrative.

Most tellingly, however, Alphouns utilizes the present-tense — "'I *am* he'" —

instead of the past in this passage. Alphouns's use of the present tense here reflects the text's own frequent present-tense references to Meliors and William while they wore the deerskins. Alphouns's line, then, connects his sense of identity to that of the lovers' while in disguise. The reflected tenses may, as Priest reads them, render Alphouns's transformation more a disguise itself than a shape-shifting.[57] However, such a connection need not be one-way: the reflected tenses may also serve to imply that the other characters' disguises function as transformations — these humans are as intensely animal in their disguises as a physical wolf. The text treats skin as a set of clothing one wears, and presents human status, rooted as it is in self-awareness of nudity, as malleable as the skins one can put on or remove — or as the animals, human or nonhuman, one can easily become.

Alphouns's use of the present tense, rather, throws doubt upon the humanity of his supposed restoration. Even now, fully human once more, Alphouns still intertwines his sense of self with his nonhuman animal form. And Alphouns claims, in present tense, his supposedly past werewolf identity not once but twice: when later telling of how he snatched William as a child to save him from a deadly plot, Alphouns says once more and with greater emphasis, "'I *am* þe werwolf, wite ȝe for soþe'" (4627, emphasis added) — you [should] know [this] in truth, he adds. Even though physically human once more, Alphouns still repeatedly conceives of himself in his old wolf skin — even human, Alphouns thinks of himself as being animal "in truth." His use of present tense throws doubt on the integrity of a human shape and clothing as defining features of humanity. Nor is Alphouns the only one to confuse his nonhuman animal identity with his human shape. When initially broaching the subject of clothing to William after she has restored Alphouns, Braunde

herself identifies the now-human Alphouns as *werwolf*: "þe werwolf þe bisecheþ / þat tow tit com him to to tire him in his wedes" (4477-4478). It is the *werwolf* that asks for William to bring him clothes to dress in, not *Alphouns* or the *prince* or even William's *frend*, though Braunde knows Alphouns by all those monikers. Similarly, when William goes to see his restored friend, the text describes the room as the place where "chaunged was þe *best*" (4500). The form he held overshadows Alphouns's human shape as the text identifies him not simply as "a worþi kniȝt" but also as one just "out of þe werwolfs wise" (4501). While Alphouns's rationality as a werewolf marked him as human, his return to bipedal shape remains haunted by his previous lupine one. Even while Alphouns later marries William's sister and ascends to the Spanish throne, so signaling his full reabsorption into human society, the specter of his transformation lingers with this expression of conflation. He cannot shed animal identity because there he has nothing *to* shed. As a wolf, he behaved as a human by engaging his "mannes munde" and utilizing his reason despite his form. As a human, he identifies with his bestial figure and remains unable to distinguish between who he was as a wolf and who he is as a man. Alphouns instead inhabits both shapes: he perceives himself as a bipedal wolf while the text treats him as a quadrupedal human.

Nor does the text try to soften any potential discomfort in Alphouns' dual identities. While the previous scenes involving clothing and recognition are arguably comedic, thanks to William's lack of understanding, the text does not render Alphouns's report of his identity comedic. The romance provides no normalizing joke and offers no healing humor to turn a potentially dangerous idea into playful speculation. While the audience cannot forget the borderline ludicrousness of Braunde's and William's argument over clothing or

Alphouns's later chastising of William for his lack of recognition, Alphouns's speech cannot be read as playfully silly. If the text relates Alphouns's animalness as humorous misadventure, then it depicts his return to humanity as a more serious matter. One could argue, as Birrer does, that this scene does not need to be played as a joke because it represents a restoration of humanity and, she argues, a privileging of the "category of '(hu)man'" over other animals.[58] In her reading, *William of Palerne* erases its own representation of the human animal and instead perpetuates human exceptionalism by restoring Alphouns to his proper place as separate and above nonhuman animals. But we know that Alphouns does not allow that separation to persist and undermines his supposed restoration by conflating his present human identity with his past lupine one. If the text used humor to alleviate the tension between his human mind and wolf shape, it leaves his lingering animality while in human form uncomfortably out in the open, exposed, unresolved. The text refuses to close the loop, leaving the audience holding the loose end without the playful distance of a jest. Alphouns is not just a humorous imagining of the human-as-animal, but a representation of human animality that cannot be laughed off: he encompasses both werewolf and man, no matter the state of his skin or the arrangement of his limbs. The text returns to him all his human trappings but refuses to relinquish Alphouns from his identity as an animal.

Dressing for the Part: Shaping and Performing the Animal

Alphouns is not the only figure in the romance who dances on the physical boundaries between human and nonhuman animal. While Alphouns's skin grew fur to

obscure his flesh, his friends William and Meliors disguise their own human skin with nonhuman animal hides in their escape from Rome. Of interest here is the fact that not only does the text insist on the success of the lovers' disguises, but it also emphasizes the ambiguity between human and nonhuman animals with depictions of the playful dressing and inter-layering of clothes and pelts.

The lovers dress in bearskins to escape Rome and Meliors's unwanted marriage, which starts them on a long journey through the land. The romance devotes quite a bit of attention to the lovers' disguises, expending nearly 40 lines over two separate sequences (1719-1748; 2585-2598) on the lovers' putting on the skins. This abundance of detail sharply contrasts with the noticeable lack of detail in William's arming scenes. Considering the many battles in which William engages, one would expect *William of Palerne* to offer the common romance trope of a knight's arming sequence. And yet, while William does undergo several arming and disarming scenes over the course of the romance, none exceeds a single line: "Anon he was armed at alle maner poyntes" (3278); "unarmed him anon, and afterward cloþed" (3476); and "unarmed him anon, and afterward him cloþed" (3669–3670). In the first mention of arming, William is immediately armed in all necessary ways, and in the latter two, he is immediately unarmed and then clothed. None of these scenes provides any detail about William's arms themselves or the process of arming or disarming. The scenes serve merely to inform the audience that arming or disarming has occurred. In fact, the text only affords one arms-related scene great detail: William's choosing of a shield, which requires four lines to describe the shield's design (3216–3219). Therefore, the focus in the text seems to be not on William's martial dressing but his (and Meliors's)

nonhuman animal disguises. The text thus deemphasizes the traditional arming trope in favor of highlighting the lovers' dressing in their skins. The poem pulls to the forefront the disguising scenes, which take over the function of the arming scene as an identity-forming ritual.[59] In this way, the poem places great weight on these sequences and presents them as identity-shaping moments of greater impact for the romance than the traditionally and generic ritual of arming a knight.

The text thus invites its audience to read these scenes as pivotal to the definition and representation of the lovers' identities. And so, let us examine these scenes more closely. Alisaundrine first disguises Meliors, fastening her into the skin until none would believe she were anything but a bear:

> And sche melled hire Meliors ferst to greiþe,
> and festened hire in þat fel wiþ ful gode þonges
> above hire trie atir, to talke þe soþe,
> þat no man upon mold miȝt oþer parceyve
> but sche a bere were to baite at a stake,
> so justislich eche liþ joyned. (1719–1724)

Alisaundrine "melled hire" — and again we see the handmaid exert herself — to "greiþe" or dress Meliors (1719) so she is "tiffed" in "þat tyr" (1725), or dressed in that attire. The bearskin acts as an additional, outer layer of clothing, since Alisaundrine has craftily "festened" (1720) the skins above Meliors's "trie atir" (1721), or fastened the skins atop Meliors's fine clothing. And yet that seemingly simple depiction of lacing one's clothing transforms Meliors into a convincing nonhuman animal: Alisaundrine has so "justislich eche liþ joyned" (1724), or closely joined each joint or flap of the skin over Meliors that "no man upon mold" (1722) would perceive her as anything but a "bere [...] to baite at a

stake" (1723), or no one on earth would recognize Meliors as a human and, instead, see her as a bear to bait at a stake.[60]

And, once she suitably costumes Meliors, Alisaundrine "in þat oþer bere-skyn bewrapped William þanne, / and laced wel eche leme wiþ lastend þonges" (1735–1736), or wrapped William in the second bearskin and tightly laced each of his limbs therein. Alisaundrine so successfully disguises the lovers that she essentially transforms them: the skins entirely conceal their human identities to any who see them, such that William and Meliors become real bears (or, later, deer) to any and all outside who perceive them (1722, 2594-2595). The skins obscure the lovers' identities — their very humanity, in fact — to all but those already in the know. The text invites its audience, then, to be both the outside eyes that see only a pair of bears and the confidante who knows what lies beneath those pelts. The audience's inclusion in the big 'secret' of the lovers' disguises lends an almost playful air to the text's confusion of species categories.

However, when their pursuers discover their bearskin disguises, William and Meliors do not have Alisaundrine's clever assistance to provide them with another pair of animal hides. Instead, their werewolf companion Alphouns kills and brings to the lovers two deer, a hart and a hind. Whereas in the French *Guillaume de Palerne* Alphouns skins the deer for the lovers, *William of Palerne* depicts the lovers themselves flaying the deer. For the Middle English text, the lovers must be actively complicit in obtaining and dressing in their next disguise-cum-identity. Nonetheless, the lack of Alisaundrine's pseudo-magical assistance does not detract from the efficacy of the lovers' guises:

þe skinnes sat saddeli sowed on hem boþe,

as hit hade ben on þe beste þat hit growed.
And better þei semed þan to siȝt semliche hertes,
þan þei semed before, bere whan þei were,
so justilion eþer of hem were joyned þe skinnes. (2592-2596)

The lovers so "saddeli sowed" (2592) or tightly sewed the deerskins on that the skins seem like those "growed" by "þe beste" itself (2593). The text comments, too, that the lovers are "to siȝt" (2594) or by sight the "semliche" (2594) or handsomest of deer because they have "so justilon [...] joyned" or so closely and tightly joined the skins together — seeming "better" (2594) and more like deer, in fact, than they seemed like bears "before" (2595). The final line here echoes the text's previous assurances about the bearskins — that they have "so justisliche [...] joyned" (1724) or closely joined the skins that no one can "parceyve" (1722), or perceive, that they are not in fact bears or deer. Even without Alisaundrine's clever skills, the lovers convincingly disguise themselves yet again. They no longer need a pseudo-magical mediator to become other animals and playfully dress each other in their new skins to smoothly transform from bear to human to deer. In fact, this transition — from human to bear to deer — can be read, Schiff argues, as the lovers' "ascending in status in the animalized" as deer were the most prized prey in Western European venery.[61] This sequence serves to push the lovers further from the human and into the nonhuman animal category: the lovers begin as bears, animals known for their similarity to humans, and change to deer, the most *huntable* animal in contemporary tradition. And they change with ease: the lovers take on other animal identities as easily as they would dress themselves in their clothes. The text invites the reader to imagine how easily the human can slip deeper and deeper into the category of animal.

And the romance seems again to highlight how easy a transition it is for the lovers: "Eiþer gamliche gan greþe oþer gailiche þerinne / [...] / þei were greiþed gayli in þat gere" (2591-2597). The lovers "greiþed gayli" or 'dressed happily' in the skins as though they were simple cloaks, "gamliche" and "gailiche," or playfully and cheerfully, sewing each other up in their new disguises. The skins function as "gere" or apparel that they wear and serve the same function of 'clothes' that the bearskins had previously.[62] What begins as cunning clothing becomes something more as the disguised party seemingly transforms into the very being whose *tyr* they wear. Not unlike how Alisaundrine's wearing "boiȝes cloþes" (1705) enabled her to strut "bogeysliche as a boye" (1707), effectively transforming her, the lovers transform into something that goes beyond their outer layer of disguise. And, just like Alisaundrine, they do so with the *bourde*-like joy of a joke.

As the lovers skin, and then put on the deerskins, the text glosses over the highly ritualized process of removing the animal's hide: "William hent hastili þe hert, and Meliors þe hinde, / and as smartli as þei couþe, þe skinnes of turned" (2589-2590). Again, we see the general grabbing verb "hent" as the lovers 'grab' their respective deer (William, the hart, Meliors, the hind) and "of turne" or strip off the skins as "smartli" or neatly as they can before they cheerily don their new skins in the very next line (2591). While the text also utilizes *hent* when the lovers remove their bearskin disguises (2420), the term then makes sense in the context of removing clothing-like garments, whereas now it seems strange here when applied to specifically skinning game. Indeed, the text passes over the often-gruesome details of the skinning process that were so important to aristocratic hunting practice, ignoring this human-constructed ritual in favor of the *gamliche* and

gailiche (again, playfully and cheerfully) dressing in the deer pelts for a perceptibly perfect transformation into the very likeness of deer. Unlike for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the aristocratic and elaborate skinning ritual is not important for *William of Palerne*. Instead, the romance focuses on only the most basic actions needed to get to that shift from human to nonhuman animal: the lovers merely 'grab' these clothes and 'dress' themselves in them without the narrative belaboring the process of properly skinning and cleaning the deer carcasses. In doing so, the text suggests that the hunt's hierarchizing process (in which humans ritualistically 'unmake' and 'reform' animal bodies at will) serves no purpose here.[63] Instead of placing themselves above the slain deer through the exercise of skinning and "unmaking" them, William and Meliors *become* the deer by taking on those animals' skins and, as I will show in the next section, their nonhuman identities. The lovers transform from nonhuman animal to human and back again as easily as changing their clothes, and the text leavens this perhaps too-easy shift with an almost insistent light-hearted tone — it repeatedly notes how *gamliche* and *gailiche* and *gayli* the lovers disguise themselves, or how playfully and cheerfully and happily this transformative process unfolds.

However, even as the lovers wear the skins as clothing, we must remember the narrator's observations that the lovers have fastened the hides over their own clothing. The text self-consciously notes this detail for each lover at several points: first, as they first dress in their bearskins ("above hire trie atir" and "above his cloþes, þat comly were and riche" [1721, 1737], or above rich and beautiful clothing); second, while they hide from quarriers in the woods ("dof blive þis bere-skyn, and be stille in þi cloþes" [2343], or as

William urges Meliors, remove [her] bearskin and be in [her] clothes, ostensibly so that she may be known by her fine clothing); and third when Queen Felice sees the deerskin-clad lovers near the end of their disguising sequences ("here comli cloþing þat kevered hem þerunder / Þe quen saw" [3034-3035], or the queen saw the handsome clothing that covered them under the skins). The textual insistence is significant: the text refuses to take for granted that William and Meliors do not go naked beneath their skins, but rather makes a point to repeatedly indicate they are clothed beneath the disguises. Why draw attention to this detail?

One popular theory offered by critics is that the romance had, at one point at least, some form of oral predecessor which explicitly rendered the lovers as physically transformed.[64] The detail of clothing-beneath-hides, then, may serve to separate this romance from its folkloric forerunners, or at least differentiates it from folkloric tropes of transformation that occur when humans wear nonhuman animal pelts. However, the textual insistence that the lovers stay clothed under their hides fits our previous discussion of nakedness and humanity, i.e.: Alphouns's clothing as signaling his return to humanity, and medieval understanding of the human (mainly, here, that humans wear clothing). If we continue to read clothing as a signifier of humanity, then the lovers retain their humanness even as they take on the bears' and deer's skins and, as we shall see shortly, those animals' postures. The lovers appear and act in the quadrupedal shape of a nonhuman animal, having no shame in their 'naked' hide, because they are still clothed, still human, beneath those pelts. The text renders the skins themselves as clothing, as the lovers dress in them as they would any other garment. What so convincingly presents them as nonhuman animal also

acts as buffer to that animality — even if the lovers were not dressed beneath their hides, the skins would fill the role of covering their nakedness. In that sense, the lovers are doubly dressed in both the rich garments beneath their disguises and the hides they wear as *gere*, and these two surfaces, the human beneath the nonhuman animal, function very similarly as clothing. Even while the skins of the outermost layer may act as a sign of nakedness, as the perception of the lovers as bears or deer imply a lack of such human signifiers, the lovers' apparent absence of shame cannot so readily be interpreted as a correlating absence of humanity. Signifiers double and compete here as hide and clothing work with and against each other as indicators of human and nonhuman animal definitions. As the clothing the lovers wear helps to exclude them from the category of animal, the skins they put on reinscribe them into that very category.

But the lovers do not leave their disguises to just the wearing of skins alone — they also perform the animals they pretend to be. Not unlike Alisaundrine before them and Alphouns in the narrative, the lovers mingle with their environment and exert themselves as nonhuman animals. In their bearskins, they alternately walk as man and as other animals: "faire on þer tvo fet þei ferde upon niȝtes, / but whan it drow to þe dai, þei ferde as bestes, / ferd on here foure fet in fourme of tvo beres" (1913-1915), or they travelled on two feet at night, but during the day they traveled as beasts, on four feet in the form of two bears. In medieval thought, bipedalism was a human state and quadrupedalism a nonhuman one, rooted in the concepts of divine creation: God created humans distinct from other animals via the human's upright gait, "thereby making mankind the only animal species that could behold the heavens and partake of the divine."[65] Given this perspective, we see how Schiff

reads the lovers' dressing in the bears' hides and utilizing their postures as "a first phase in the shedding of their humanity."[66] The text, then, presents the lovers as diverting from their divine privilege of bipedal posture when they descend onto all fours. But the lovers do not remain on all fours: instead, they vacillate between traveling upright and walking on hands and feet. If William and Meliors shed their humanity when they walk on four feet, then they rather quickly regain it when they resume walking on two. They perform their disguises and, in doing so, alternately inhabit human and nonhuman animal categories such that they can easily transition from one to the other over the course of their journey.

The text renders these transitions among animal categories with quite a bit of humor. When the lovers escape from Rome in their newly sewn bear disguises, they run on all fours through the gardens where a Grecian man spies them (1767-1785; 2157-2167). The man flees the gardens terrified for his life because he is certain the bears will devour him — literally, 'make meat of him and murder him to death' ("to have mad of him mete and murþered him to deþe" [1774]). His fear, for the audience, seems comically hyperbolic, given our knowledge that those supposedly murderous bears are merely two fleeing paramours. The scene prefaces and informs a later scene, unique to the Middle English version[67]: as William and Meliors attempt to escape a barge on which they stowed away to cross to Palerne, their disguises frighten a ship boy who assumes they are stray deer (2771-2781). The boy, like the Greek man almost precisely a thousand lines before, fears desperately for his life, and the text evokes the Greek man's terror earlier in its description of the boy's: each grows "neiȝ wod of his witt," or nearly insane/out of his wits for fear (2772) and dread (1771). The text describes the boy's fear and the Greek's dread in the

identical phrase, *neiȝ wod of his witt*, and creates a parallel between that first encounter and this second one.

However, instead of fleeing as the Greek does, the boy attacks the deer in an attempt to kill "þe bestes" (2773): he strikes "þe hinde" and lands a blow on Meliors's neck such that "sche top over tail tombled over þe hacches" (2776), or tumbled over the deck. The word choice here, "top over tail," implies Meliors falls head-over-coccyx but also head-over-literal-tail, as the romance plays with the image of Meliors in her deerskin with, presumably, its tail.[68] Immediately after, William (as the hart) leaps to Meliors's rescue: "þe hert ful hastili hent hire up in armes" (2777). Leaping overboard, William flees with Meliors in his arms. The text follows its wordplay with the image of deer-clad William scooping her into his deer-arms and making off into the night. Appropriately, the ship boy watches in "wonder" (2805) as these *bestes* escape "wiþ so comely contenaunce clippend in armes, / and ferden ferst on foure fet, and seþþe up tweyne" (2808-2809): William races off with "comely contenaunce," or handsome bearing, first on four feet and then on two, "clippend" or holding Meliors all the while securely in his embrace. If the text plays with the image of Meliors's human-bottom/nonhuman-tail, then it rolics in this scene: William, still clad in his deerskin, flees on four feet with Meliors "clippend in armes" in an anatomically challenging arrangement before giving up on the pretense and standing "up tweyne" (2809) to run away.

While William attempts to maintain the posture of a deer while holding Meliors as no deer can, he eventually must rise up on two feet in a traditionally human posture to escape, all while still appearing to be a deer. And while standing to run on two feet should

betray William's disguise for what it is, the ship-boy remains none the wiser. Instead, again, he marvels in "wonder" at this deer's "coynte cuntenaunce" or clever, perhaps even supernatural, bearing or posture that allows it to flee in such a manner (2806, 2824).[69] The scenario is rather comedic from the audience's perspective: a man in a deer-suit scoops up a woman in a deer-suit and, carrying her in his arms, somehow manages to flee on all fours before giving up and running away on two feet, all the while as a boy watches in amazement that deer could be so clever or fey. Nor is the boy alone in his marveling: when he tells his shipmates of the incident, they too feel "awondred" (2826) of these potentially magical deer who can walk upright. They find it easier to believe that these nonhuman animals behave in human-like ways than to believe the deer are not deer at all.

This sequence contrasts with its preface in the scenes with the Greek man: when the man tells his friends of his supposed near-death experience in the gardens, they feel "fain for he was adradde, / and lauȝeden of þat gode layk" (1783-1784), or amused that he was afraid and laughed at his 'amusing adventure' or even his 'game.'[70] This passage, too, is quite humorous: a pair of people in bear-suits "awai a wallop, as þei wod semed" (1770), or gallop away as though they were mad, and terrify a random man who, despite the fact that these supposed bears wildly careen on all fours *away*, believes that they are about to turn and devour him. Here, the Greek's friends act as a stand-in for the romance's audience and encourage us to recognize the absurdity of the anecdote and respond accordingly with amusement.

As if to remind us of our secret knowledge, in both scenes the text references the lovers' humanity beneath their disguises by having them walk upright — William during

his escape from the barge with Meliors (2809) and both lovers when they leave behind the Roman garden: "Whilum þei went on alle four, as doþ wilde bestes, / and whan þei wery were, þei went upriȝttes" (1788-1789), or at times they went on all fours like the wild beasts and, when they were tired, they went upright. In both sequences, the text invites us to revel in our secret knowledge of what those vicious bears or magical deer are beneath their skins and realize the full ridiculousness of these scenarios.

The text seems to delight in this confusion of human and other animal behaviors. Particularly in the case of the ship-boy scene, these perceived nonhuman animals fall into human practices even as the narrative itself insists on the truth beneath the skins. The textual vacillation between tearing down and setting up human/nonhuman animal boundaries creates a sense of ambiguity: while it is humorous to read the back-and-forth between one and the other and both at once, the careful interjections of comedic miming also serve to undermine clear distinctions between human and other animals and, by extension, human exceptionalism. The lovers emphasize the confusion between the categories of human and nonhuman animal as they fluidly slip between both categories and the humor of their antics eases this confusion of species into a playful game. The lovers' species transformations follow Alisaundrine's earlier gender transformation and can be similarly read as a jest — just a *bourde*. On the other hand, the lovers' shifting postures may also, as Schiff argues, indicate an increasing tension between human/nonhuman animal boundaries as the lovers descend further into animality.[71] The juxtaposition of quadrupedal travel, so unnatural for humans, with bipedal travel, unusual for nonhuman animals, creates tensions in the text — comedic tension and tension between species

categories. The disguises may serve, as Houwen argues, as the means by which William and Meliors cross the human/nonhuman animal divide, but the text's frequent references to their postures and gaits while in bear or deer disguises act to create comedic relief and to reinstate boundaries.[72] The text renders the lovers' disguises as, yes, a humorous jape but also nonetheless a *convincing* transformation. We have already discussed the power of the joke to heal and to normalize transgressive or traumatizing truths, and its use here aligns with the romance's depiction of the performative aspects of disguise. The efficacy of the performance enhances the success of the disguises while inviting the audience, with our secret knowledge of the narrative, to laugh at the duped parties. The text encourages amusement in the ease with which these characters transform from human to nonhuman animal and implies that the two categories cannot be definitively held apart and separate.

A Roe by Any Other Name: Mixing Textual Referents

William of Palerne not only emphasizes the ambiguity of nonhuman/human animal distinctions through the lovers' shifting postures and gaits but also through species confusion expressed by the romance's characters and, indeed, by the text itself. Primarily, we focus here briefly on the Roman Emperor and at greater length on Queen Felice, both of whom learn of William's and Meliors's disguises. Interestingly, neither of these figures treats the lovers as the humans they know them to be; instead they seem to consider William and Meliors as the animals their disguises present them as. For one, when the Roman Emperor discovers the lovers' ruse to escape Rome, he immediately calls for a hunt: "Þan was it kenly komanded a kri to make newe, / þat eche burn schuld bisily tvo white beres

seke" (2174-2175), or then it was urgently commanded to make anew a hunt or proclamation that every man should diligently seek two white bears. While "kri" here likely indicates a 'proclamation' or 'public command' — the Emperor's 'decree' that all shall pursue the bears — it is also part of the "set terms" of the hunt, referring to a hunting cry or even 'the bay of a hound' or 'pack of hounds.'[73] Considering the text's phrasing during this pursuit and its emphasis on hunting images elsewhere,[74] the word evokes the setting a hunt. Note, too that when the Roman emperor calls for a hunt, he does so for *beres*, not humans. The text here emphasizes his demand for a hunt, with men pursuing the *beres* "on hors and on fote, / huntyng wiþ houndes alle heie wodes" (2177-2178). The poem references the "houndes" 5 times in roughly 16 lines, and the hounds' "hauteyn of *cryes*" (2187, emphasis added), or powerful cries, as they chase down their "prey" (2196) echo the previous *kri* that began the hunt.[75] While the emperor's hunt for *beres* may have been an effort to save face in light of his daughter's flight from Rome (and from an important political match with the Greek emperor's son), the text focuses on the consequences of that decree: in calling for the hunt of "tvo white beres" (2175), whom he knows *not* to be actual bears, the emperor elides the lovers' humanity with the category of prey animal.

By contrast, the text depicts Queen Felice as less unwilling and more unable to reconcile her knowledge of the lovers' human species with her perception of their deer shapes. *William of Palerne* provides a veritable deluge of clues to show that Queen Felice knows the lovers' identities. Initially, Felice has a prophetic dream about a werewolf and his bear companions, one with a knight's face and the other with a lady's face, who become deer and then, as a wise man interprets the dream for her, save Palerne from its siege (2868-

2916). Soon after, Queen Felice sees a pair of deer outside her window and spies beneath their hides "here comli cloþing þat kevered hem" (3034), or the handsome clothing that covered them. Felice knows by this point what the sign of the deer means. However, she continues to contemplate "þe hert and þe hinde" (2979) at her window, and with "styf studie" (2781), or intense thought or perplexity, observes how they "lye collinge in fere, / makende þe most joye þat man miȝt devise" (2984-2985), or lie together embracing and making the most bliss that man might conceive. Felice becomes besotted with their "prive pleyes of paramoures wordes" (2987), or furtive (and implied amorous) play of lovers' words, despite being unable to hear "of nouȝt þat þei seide" (2988), or nothing that they said. She can see the lovers embracing and speaking with each other and identifies their speech as "paramoures wordes" — lovers' words — even without hearing it. She recognizes their behavior in human contexts, but still thinks of them as *hert* and *hinde*. Queen Felice even seeks advice from her priest and shows him the deer from her window. In response, he reminds her of the dream he had interpreted for her just the other day and of the stories that they had heard from Rome about the escaped lovers William and Meliors (3040-3058). He even tells Felice, "þe ȝond is þat semly and his selve make" (3051), or that over there is that noble (one) and his very same beloved, who will "wiȝtli þis werre winne" (3052), or quickly win this war. The priest urges her to figure out how to best "þo bestes winne" (3057), obtain or even *persuade* those beasts, and have "þe kniȝt and þat komli" (3058), or that knight and that beautiful (one), come to her chambers.[76] That is to say, the priest freely mixes human and nonhuman animal referents in his discussion with Felice, as though he both recognizes these 'deer' as humans and yet also as contained in

nonhuman form. The text gives Felice more clues as to the identities of this *hart* and *hinde* than the emperor himself had received when he realized the truth behind the 'bears.' And yet, Felice determines that she must sneak closer to them and hide nearby to hear them speak to be sure of who or what they are. And to do so, she dresses in a deerskin of her own so as not to startle these 'deer' when she approaches.

Queen Felice's decision to wear such a disguise has piqued scholarly interest. Some, like Caroline Bynum and Kate Tibbals, think Felice's deerskin could be a detail that is left over from the romance's presumed folkloric predecessors, stories in which the lovers had shapeshifted and that necessitated the queen's disguise to approach actual deer.[77] I am concerned less with why Felice wears the deerskin and more with the implications and the execution of that choice. The text emphasizes Felice's strange refusal to acknowledge the lovers' human species and instead juxtaposes the learned man's story of William's and Meliors' escape from Rome with Felice's subsequent order for "wel to be sewed / an huge hindes hide, *as þe oþer were*" (3059-3060, emphasis added), or a huge hind's hide to be sewed well, as the others were. Both the audience and Felice know about the disguises, yet the queen dresses herself in a hind's skin and goes "out to þe bestes" (3062) and hides under a bush "til sche wist what þei were, ȝif þei wold speke" (3063) — until she knew what they were [and] if they would speak. Despite her dream, the counsel of her advisor, and the lovers' "paramoures wordes" (2987), Felice still goes to surveil these *bestes* until she can determine "what þei were" (3063) by their speech. Her own deerskin disguise seems an unnecessary caution, as Felice ought to know "what þei were" already. Instead,

Felice cannot treat the lovers as human but sees them first and foremost as deer, to the point that she later skins the lovers from their deer hides, as we shall see shortly.

The poem invites the perception of an elision of human/nonhuman animal identities. Beyond the dressing in the hides, the narrator refers to the lovers themselves both by name and by animal monikers. The text behaves in the same fashion with the werewolf Alphouns, whom it consistently calls *best* or *werwolf* even after revealing Alphouns' identity as the lost Spanish heir. Alphouns's physical wolf form supersedes any knowledge of his humanity, and the text maintains a focus on his lupine shape for as long as he inhabits it. By contrast, the romance cannot seem to decide what to call the lovers, human or nonhuman animal. It refers to the pair as both, initially referring to them in their disguises as "William and þe mayde, þat were white beres" (1764). Afterwards, the text begins to alternate its referents: it refers to the lovers as *beres* as many times as human monikers: indeed, the narrative calls the lovers by name and names them as *beres* fifteen times each whilst they are in their bearskins.[78] When identifying who speaks to whom, the text calls the lovers by name an additional fifteen times while in the bearskins, but here, the use of their names serves a more narrative function by clarifying which of these two *beres* speaks.[79] The poem, it seems, presents the lovers as ambiguously specied on a textual level as it freely and almost interchangeably names them by both human and nonhuman terms.

And yet, the text ups the ante when the lovers acquire their deerskins. When their disguises are discovered and the skins become useless, the lovers take to carrying rather than wearing them: they venture forth "cloþed in here cloþes [...] / wiþ hem boþe bere-

felles þei bere in here armes, / so loþe hem was þo to lese or leve hem bihinde" (2428–2431), or clothed in their clothes ... they were so loath to lose or leave the bearskins behind they both bore them in their arms. The skins' have lost their function as a disguise, yet the lovers are still "so loþe" (2431) to abandon them that they instead carry them like cloaks "in here armes" (2430). Here, again, the text insists on their clothing — they go "cloþed in here cloþes" (2428) — and this emphasis seems strange considering the text's insistence that they had never taken their garments off beneath the skins. At this point, the text also increases the frequency with which it refers to them by name, doing so almost exclusively now that they no longer wear the bearskins: it calls them by name or a human referent roughly eleven times and distinguishes who speaks an additional seven times. Outside of the characters' speech, the text does not refer to the lovers in any nonhuman animal terms. Without the hides obscuring their clothing, the lovers seem to temporarily return to their humanity: they are not shamelessly 'naked' atop their garments anymore, but their fine clothing safely obscures their inner, human skin. Their interlayers of clothing and hide spare them from shame, as they always in some way cover themselves and never actually go naked. And yet, those same layers and lack of shame also mark the lovers as always already human (with fine clothes beneath animal skins) and nonhuman animal (with naked hides atop). The hides of bear/deer skin and human skin sandwich the lovers' clothing, and in doing so simultaneously conceal and integrate the clothing into the layers of flesh both naked and obscured. As the text subsumes the hides into the category of clothing, so too does it insist that they remain skin: the hides act not only as an effective disguise but also a source of anxiety that necessitates repeated assurances that the lovers remain clothed

between their skins. The romance obscures and even blends the categories of skin and clothing, much like it does the categories of human/nonhuman animals within its narrative.

However, the text reinstates the nonhuman animal referents when the lovers dress in the deerskins, favoring *hart* and *hinde* over *William* and *Meliors* outside of clarifying speakers: while the narrator names the lovers only thirteen times when indicating who speaks in conversation, the text refers to the lovers by name or human terms only fourteen times in this section, and it refers to them as deer or even *bestes* over thirty times while they wear the deerskins, not counting references to them as deer in Queen Felice's dream sequence or her subsequent conversations with her priest, which would constitute an additional twelve such referents.[80] Of the section's fourteen human referents, fully half refer to the lovers prior to or outside their disguises, such as in a narrative retelling or in reference to family lineage. In this deerskin section, the text's use of traditionally nonhuman animal referents for the lovers increases over 54% from the previous bearskin episode and, if we discount the human referents regarding William's lineage, its use of human referents drops roughly 46%. The poem's very text seems to render William and Meliors more generally animal while in their deerskins, with only limited reference to their human species.

Nonetheless, those limited references tell us something about the romance's conception of the human. Nearly three-quarters of the text's human referents in this section specifically tie the lovers to human practices. Of that, 30% refer to William's lineage, yet when the poem reminds its audience of William's familial ties to Palerne, it does so by pausing its narration of the group's entry into the region (2623-2636). Tellingly, the text

introduces this interlude with mixed species signifiers, noting that "al was William landes, [...] / he þat þere was an hert" (2623-2624) — or all were William's lands, he who was a deer there — before moving through William's lineage to his mother's current predicament with the Spanish siege. The text also briefly relates the reaches of William's ancestral land as it stood under the deceased King Ebrouns, "Williams fader" (2629), but it reiterates, too, that William travels through Palerne "as an hert" (2629) in the same line. On the one hand, the text attempts to disconnect William from his disguise in order to discuss his royal lineage and clarify his *human* claims to the land he has entered. On the other hand, the text cannot disconnect him from it entirely as it insists twice that he returns to Palerne as "an hert." The text thus locates William in his royal line and immediately identifies him as a deer in those very lands he may rule by (human) birthright, imbricating William's aristocratic bloodline and his nonhuman animal disguise-cum-identity and presenting him as both the deer-and-son of King Ebrouns and the deer-and-heir to Palerne itself.

The majority of the text's human referents in this section — another 48% — distinguish the lovers' conversations. The text could feasibly differentiate between the lovers more clearly with *hart* and *hinde* than it could with *beres* in the previous episode, and yet it still almost always relies upon their human monikers to do so. When the lovers are engaging in the recognizably human act of speaking and conversing, the text insists on identifying the lovers by name. However, the poem does even this inconsistently: for example, during William's and Meliors' escape from the ship (2774-2809), the text begins to confuse its own referents as it relates how "þe hert" carried "þe hinde" to safety before checking her for injuries — utilizing nonhuman animal monikers while William performs

such human feats. The romance even calls them deer while they speak and breaks its own pattern of human referents during human practices: "Þan saide þe hert to þe hinde hendly and faire" (2785), or then the hart lovingly and courteously said to the hind. William laments Meliors's injury, and "seide Meliors þanne" for him not to grieve so (2792). The text invites ambiguity, abandoning the pattern it had maintained throughout the disguising sequences as a *hert* speaks to a *hinde*, and *Meliors* responds. If medieval thought defines humans as being rational — and further qualified by their bodies and their "human speech"[81] — then this scene undermines those supposedly defining traits. The romance plays with the contemporary definition of the human as it mixes its referents and, consequently, implicates the nonhuman animal as potentially participatory in distinctly human practices.

William of Palerne's vacillating referents serve to textually illustrate the efficacy of the lovers' disguises but bears the consequence of demonstrating the ease with which species definitions overlap in the general category of animal. Romance asks its audiences to suspend disbelief and play along with the text, and such an audience would not likely protest the romance's calling the lovers deer or bears so long as the narrative itself remained clear. The audience accepts the text's choice to call the lovers *hart/hinde* or *beres* and, on some level, accepts the lovers as such. The switching of referents exhibits on a textual level the ambiguity of species categories exhibited within the narrative.

Yet, when the text can close this ambiguity when William's and Meliors remove their hides after following Queen Felice to the castle, the lovers do not (or cannot?) simply take off their deerskins. While the text carefully articulates how the lovers fasten the

deerskins on like clothing, much as they did the bearskins earlier, William and Meliors cannot so easily remove this second set of hides. Instead, when Queen Felice takes the lovers into her chambers, she must skin the hides from their bodies: "þe quen kauȝt a knif, and komli hireselve / William and his worþi fere swiftli unlaced / out of þe hidous hidus" (3199-3201). Using a sharp "knif," Felice quickly cuts away or "unlace[s]" the lovers from their now "hidous hidus," or hideous hides. The use of the term *unlaced* here evokes the powerful unmaking moment from the ritual of the hunt that is so important in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, as I discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation.[82] Despite their ability to remove and carry the bear-hides as so much clothing, the lovers cannot remove this latest disguise. Instead, even though the text glosses over the initial skinning of the deer to retrieve the hides, it here touches upon hunting ritual — mainly its set code of terminology. William and Meliors thus join Sir Gawain in the category of skinned human animal. The lovers, as with others' perceptions of them throughout the romance, have become inextricable from the animal skins they wear, inscribed into deer as though the hides were their own skin, and they cannot return to humanity of their own power: they must be flayed like hunted deer, peeling back their second skins to restore their original identities.

Nonetheless, this skinning sequence seems insufficient to fully restore the lovers to humanity. Felice, like Braunde for Alphouns after her, must also bathe and clothe the pair. Queen Felice provides the lovers with "tvo baþes" (3297) in which they "dede hem baþe boþe tvo wel faire" (3206), or two baths in which they bathed both of the two quite courteously or properly. Afterwards, she has the lovers "greiþed [...] gaili" (3207), or

dressed happily.[83] The text abbreviates the lovers' transition from skinned to bathed human animals in comparison to Alphouns's bathing and dressing: Felice skins, bathes, and dresses the lovers in 8 lines of verse, while the werewolf's own restoration later in the narrative takes nearly 55 lines. The other parallels apply here, too: they wear their bear and deer hides without shame, but after washing away the nonhuman residue, they must participate in human social practices and wear their clothing and not flesh as their outermost layer to avoid shame at their nakedness.

But here we also see something a little different. The text notes that the lovers are "cloþed worþli" (3202) and "greiþed [...] gaili" (3207), clothed honorably and dressed happily, respectively, but it does not insist on the *merþe* of the process as it had with the bearskins (1726) and the *gamliche* or *gailiche* dressing in the deerskins (2591). The playfulness of disguising oneself as another species has vanished, but the text nevertheless draws a parallel between William's and Meliors's fine garments and their previous disguises. Clothed appropriately for their stations, the lovers make the fairest couple that "alle men upon mold miȝt sen" (3203). The parallel phrasing, that all men of the world can see or perceive, aligns William's and Meliors's supposed restoration with their initial disguising. Just as they could be seen as naught but bears or deer, now bathed and clothed once more in human garments, they can be perceived as nothing but a "faire coupel" (3203). The text implies that their human clothes function in the same identity-altering capacity as the bear and deer hides, the romance rooting the definition of humanity in *costume*. While contemporary thought emphasizes rationality as the defining human trait,

William of Palerne suggests that superficial trappings and rituals mark its figures as human or nonhuman animal.

Nor does the text limit the implication to the lovers alone. *William of Palerne* just as carefully notes that Felice also sews herself "in an huge hindes hide, as þe oþer were" (3061), or in a large hind's skin as the others (the lovers) were, and that, further, she dresses "wel to riȝtes / hendli in þat hindeskyn, as swich bestes were" (3066-3067), or in every respect as handsomely in that hind-skin as such beasts were. Queen Felice's disguise echoes the lovers' in its efficacy in replicating the semblance of a real deer, and her facsimile of animality fools even the lovers. Meliors comments how strange that a "huge hinde" (3112) sleeps so near to them and unafraid of them (3113-3114), and William responds, ironically, that it has no reason to be afraid, because it knows "we ben riȝt swiche as itselve, / for we be so sotiliche besewed in þise hides" (3116-3117), or we are precisely the same as itself, for we are so skillfully sewn in these hides. But, William adds, if it knew "whiche bestes we were" (3118), or what beasts we were, the deer would flee them in fear. William and the narrator both refer to the disguised Queen Felice as an actual deer, and yet the text makes multiple self-conscious references to the lovers' own disguises: Meliors, dressed as a deer, reacts with awe at this "huge hinde" that rests so peacefully near them (3112); William observes that their disguises are so cleverly executed as to fool even a deer (3117), whom the audience knows is herself sewn into a deerskin just like the lovers (3061); William speaks both more accurately than he knows (he says this deer knows he and Meliors are the same as itself [3116]) and also more erroneously than he realizes (he states that the deer would flee if it knew which beasts he and Meliors were [3118]). The text thus

playfully invites its audience in on the joke: the audience knows that both the lovers and Felice have disguised themselves, and that Felice herself knows as well. When Felice finally speaks and admits she knows them ("'I wot wel what ȝe ar and whennes ȝe come'" [3122], or I know well what you are and whence you come), Meliors "wex neȝh mad for fere" (3125), or grew near mad for fear, in an echo of the Greek man and ship boy earlier in the romance. She even tosses William's own words back at him when he demands she answer him, her response an ironic '"I am swiche a best as ȝe ben'" (3133), or I am such or the same beast as you are. As Queen Felice returns to the castle with the lovers in tow, the text subsumes her with them into the nonhuman such that it refers to them all as "þre bestes [...] / so hidous in þo hides, as þei hertes were" (3176-3177), or three beasts, so hideous in those hides as if they were deer.[84] Felice even fools her maid, who knows about and even helps with the queen's disguise (3071) but who nonetheless panics when she sees their approach: the maid grows mad with fear in a very familiar formulation — "sche *wex wod of hire wit*" (3178, emphasis added). In line with the rest of this self-referential scene, Queen Felice chastises the maid and reminds her that she knows well the queen "was tiffed in atir" (3183) all along — an echo of Meliors herself, who "in þat tyr was tiffed" (1725), or in that attire was dressed. The text redeploys familiar phrasing and ironic turnabouts to depict Queen Felice's short stint as a *hinde* as an almost parodic replication of the romance's narrative thus far. That *Guillaume de Palerne* curtails several of these expansions, such as the scene with Felice's maid, indicates that the Middle English translator consciously incorporated this humorous addition.[85] Playfully, the text implicates Felice in its questioning of human definitions and broadens its demonstration of said

definitions' ambiguity to include other characters. The romance exposes its minor figures as well as its major players to the vulnerability of species categories: Felice does not have Alisaundrine or Alphouns to guide her disguise as the lovers do, and yet her deerskin successfully fools them in their own game.

The lovers reveal the ambiguity between the false-binary categories of human vs animal: they put on their disguises and become the animals in whose skins they hide beneath even as they retain distinctly human traits and behaviors. The romance thus playfully tacks back and forth between human and nonhuman animal identities and presents the lovers as bear and deer as easily as it does man and woman. Even clothed and bipedal, the lovers cannot escape the overlap in animal definitions — of the bear, the deer, themselves. Nor does their knowledge of this ambiguity make them exceptional, as Felice comedically reproduces their deerskin adventure in brief. We may conclude that the text invites its audience to view the definition of human as requiring performance: the process of costuming and acting serves to produce identity, both human and nonhuman animal, more clearly than hierarchized categories. The text breaks down the differences between the two to better highlight the similarities and emphasize the human's own place on the animal spectrum.

William the Werewolf: The Shield as Animal Signifier

William, despite his return to humanity, does not escape further animalization. His selection of a shield, and the heraldic and totemic identification it announces, also creates

a confusion of human/nonhuman status: William essentially becomes a wild beast in human form, in a neat reversal of Alphouns's rational animal in nonhuman form.

When he agrees to fight off Queen Felice's Spanish besiegers, William declines all offered arms but for one:

> [.....] a god schel of gold graiþed clene,
> and wel and faire wiþinne a werwolf depeynted,
> þat be hidous and huge, to have alle his riȝtes,
> of þe covenablest colour to knowe in þe feld. (3216–3219)

William requests a bright, golden shield with a "hidous and huge" (3218) werewolf painted on it. But he does not stop there: William goes on to explain that he wants the design to be painted "wel and faire" (3217) in the most suitable color to identify it "in þe feld" (3219) — in the battlefield but also against the shield's background[86] — and the werewolf to "have alle his riȝtes" (3218), or have all his rights — 'accuracy,' 'rightful possessions.'[87] The text emphasizes the design atop the shield as more important than the shield itself, and it focuses on William's preoccupation with the accuracy and clarity of the werewolf painting. William himself claims that, beyond this shield, he "coveyte[s] nouȝt elles" (3215) and that "oþer armes al my lif atteli never have" (3220): William denounces any additional armor, saying he desires no other arms and, further, does not intend to possess any other arms but the shield he has here requested. The text's specific description of this shield seems significant, especially considering the poem's lack of an extensive arming scene and William's refusal here to accept any other arms. The werewolf shield is also unique to the Middle English romance, as the French *Guillaume de Palerne*'s shield bears only a simple wolf.[88] While the Middle English text frequently deviates from its French source, such a

minor detail seems odd to alter. The specific implications of a werewolf, then, are important to *William of Palerne*'s rendering of its titular knight's heraldic symbol. The shield's description constitutes the longest passage focused on armor that the romance provides, and the poem's attention remains exclusively on the shield itself. Even Queen Felice's initial question — "'what signe is þe levest / to have schape in þi scheld to schene armes?'" (3213–3214) — asks what symbol William wants on his shield and not about the arms themselves. The poem does not depict armor itself, more than the process of dressing in or removing it, as relevant in the narrative or even to its knights. The only other piece of knightly equipment the poem lingers on is not an item of arms at all, but William's horse: "þe sturnest stede in hire stabul teiȝed /þat ever man upon molde miȝt of heren, / and doutiest to alle dedes þat any horse do schuld" (3226-3228). Even this first description of the horse — the most formidable in her stable ever known to man and the best at all equine feats — encompasses more lines than any of the disarming or arming scenes in the romance, which, again, never take more than a single line apiece. The full sequence of the horse's introduction takes roughly 35 lines as the steed, formerly King Ebrouns's (Queen Felice's deceased husband and William's father), has something of a backstory all his own (3225-3260).[89] The text places more emphasis on William's werewolf-painted shield than any of the other arms he must take up to defend Palerne, and its attention to William's horse indicates that these nonhuman animal components of his chivalric array are more significant than the array itself. As a consequence, the text seems to highlight William's identification with the werewolf, and its violent reputation, as the significant aspect of his shield.

While one can interpret William's request as intending to align himself with one specific and nontraditional werewolf — namely, Alphouns — the text does not reinforce that implication. And though it is possible that the werewolf on William's shield represents his helpful friend Alphouns, William does not ask for a *witty* or *hendy* werewolf, but one "hidous and huge" and rather unlike the companion who guided the lovers for so long. It would seem that William wishes to evoke the general werewolf's ferocious and violent traits with this heraldic symbol. The decision makes sense: the frightening savagery of the werewolf would better suit the battlefield than Alphouns's cleverness.

William's decision also fits the popular custom in fourteenth-century England for knights "to adopt freely chosen personal badges."[90] Heraldry was of great importance in the fourteenth century, boasting nonhuman animal symbols replete with meaning, and for a particular creature to appear on one's shield or crest functioned as "sign and warrant to the world" that that knight and/or his family were known for possessing or displaying the same corresponding traits of said creature, whether in fame or infamy.[91] Therefore, William's choosing of the werewolf, "hidous and huge" (3218), directly aligns his own identity with that of the creature — in this case the aggressive and wild werewolf. And indeed, William's shield frequently identifies him in battle. His enemies know and recognize him by the werewolf he bears, and the Spanish forces frequently point him out accordingly. They know him as the knight who "'bereth in his blasoun of a brit hewe / a wel huge werwolf wonderli depeinted'" (3572–3573); "'he it is þat þe werwolf weldes in his scheld'" (3752); "'he þat þe wolf weldes in his scheld'" (3832): the Spanish see William as the knight bearing a huge werewolf painted on his bright standard or the one who wields

the werewolf on his shield. This method of recognition is typical for battling knights — thus the use of standards and coded arms to begin with — and so it is only expected that, through the symbol on his shield, William identifies himself with the ravenous, beastly werewolf of tradition. William, in fact, *weldes* the werewolf on his shield — he 'wields,' 'takes power in,' and/or 'commands' the werewolf as a weapon all its own.[92] William's use of the werewolf here makes the werewolf appear less a heraldic symbol and more a totemic object: as Annabel Wharton (re)defines it, a totem is an object of this world (nonhuman animal or crafted) that both empowers its user with the earthly powers it represents and identifies its user as part of a group or community.[93] William's shield certainly functions as a totem: it empowers William with the ferocity of the werewolf painted upon it, and it identifies William to others. As often happened with knights and heraldry in general, William elects a nonhuman entity based on what he finds desirous or what corresponds to his own traits, to augment his identity.[94] Heraldic totems are metaphors, visual declarations of equivalence in one's very identity. And William's wielding or taking power in his suggests that he sees and/or seeks the werewolf in himself, to deploy its ferocity and violence in battle.

And William succeeds in his endeavor almost too well. As the King of Spain laments his losses, he calls William a murderer of men and a devil wreaking destruction: "'[he] haþ murþered mi men and swiche harm wrouȝt!'" he exclaims, "'[he] is sum devel degised þat doþ al þis harm!'" (3883, 3888). The Spanish king not only declares that William has wrought great harm to and even murdered his forces but he also claims that he must be a disguised devil to inflict such harm. While this sort of exclamation occurs

somewhat regularly in romance contexts, the King of Spain's word choice still bears interesting implications here. Slain forces are only to be expected in a melee, and yet the king claims that the *devel degised* has *murþered* his men. This evocation of disguise — already a recurring motif in *William of Palerne* — invites the audience to read William as a man disguised as a werewolf, or even, by extension of the romance's recurrent interweaving of transformation and costume, as a human transformed into the murderous devil that werewolves were known to be. The King of Spain goes on to say that he wishes to hunt William down as fiercely as he would a werewolf and has, already, unleashed a multitude of hounds upon him: "'I wold him hunte as hard as ever hounde in erthe / honted eny werwolf! But wel he is ware / þat I so many hondes have on him uncoupled'" (3835–3837). The King of Spain utilizes simile in the first portion of this passage — he would hunt William *as* vigorously as a werewolf — setting this analogy in the realm of figurative language. Yet the text immediately inscribes this simile into reality with the very next line: the Spanish King notes that he has *already* released a great many hounds upon William. While the king's reference to his knights as hounds stands as figurative in nature, the continuation of the image from simile to analogy serves to create a more concrete correlation. This transition, too, from simile to literal usage recalls Salisbury's observations on the transition from similes to metaphors as blurring and narrowing the divide between women and nonhuman animals from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries.[95]

Here, the shift in William's depiction from simile to metaphor, from *wielding* the werewolf to being *like* the werewolf to *being* the werewolf, correspondingly shifts the knight himself from being like a nonhuman animal to being that animal. In this sense, the

romance depicts William as a real werewolf and, once again, as an animal to be hunted. The King of Spain elides William's humanity into animality and recasts him as prey to be chased by his (equally animal) *honde* knights. The shield William carries formulates his identity in battle as some type of animal as thoroughly as Alphouns's werewolf flesh did his own, and it transforms William from rational human to ravenous beast. His werewolf-painted shield renders William not as worthy, knightly opponent but a threatening, ravening predator. William's human shape alone cannot quantify him as human: William becomes a creature to be hunted down, a nonhuman animal in human form that must be chased to ground and slaughtered. Despite his covering of armor and his human shape, the werewolf seeps into William's human identity beyond even his heraldic signifier.

Why does William choose the werewolf, with its heinous reputation, to represent himself? Knights battling fiercely as other animals recur as a trope in the literary epic and, often, in medieval romance. *William of Palerne* and its French predecessor *Guillaume de Palerne* both utilize this trope, though Leslie Sconduto argues that the latter employs them as a tool for Guillaume's "figurative metamorphosis [...] from knight to beast."[96] *Guillaume de Palerne* is also much more violent and bloody than its later Middle English sibling, as Renée Ward observes.[97] This twelfth-century version describes Guillaume as rather "demonic," and Ward notes the descriptions of Guillaume possessing dragon-red eyes and the aggression of a boar — a more negatively perceived animal — as the "poet reinforces [...] dehumanizations" of the titular knight.[98] In contrast, Ward continues, the poet of *William of Palerne* shifts those negative animal descriptors to William's enemies, referring to him instead as "freke" (human, person), and his nonhuman animal associations are with

noble creatures — the noble ferocity of the lion, for example. Ward describes the Middle English William as separated from humanity, but not *removed* from it as Guillaume seems in the French version.[99] *William of Palerne* displaces the violence and bloody deaths of its battles onto nonhuman objects — weapons, armor, horses — whereas *Guillaume de Palerne* does not shy from vivid descriptions of corpses and evisceration. Ward argues that this hyper-violent, animalistic rendering of Guillaume blurs the "species boundaries" of the French poem, with Alphouns even having to "tame" the infant Guillaume at the poem's start.[100] Ward concludes, then, that the Middle English romance perceives Alphouns as less of a threat than in *Guillaume*, as William's taking of the werewolf symbol for his shield creates a symbiotic identity between them, and so renders William himself as less violent and demonic.[101] However, William is still very violent in the Middle English romance. After all, while werewolves are known to be savage, their reputation is more that of uncontrollable berserker than chivalric knight, and William knowingly aligned himself with this beast. Perhaps he is not as explicitly bloodthirsty as Guillaume, but William nonetheless earns himself the monikers of "devel" and "werwolf", a "murþer[er]" of men. The poem may not show us the gore-slicked corpses of William's foes, but it leaves little doubt of William's body count all the same. Even though these negative signifiers come from his enemies, they are still telling: the Spanish forces would not be so distressed if William were not aggressively and steadily killing them — he does not merely slay them, but he *murders* them (3883). The conflicts seem less a battle than a wholesale slaughter. Even if *Guillaume de Palerne* dehumanizes and bloodies Guillaume more, he is no less wildly violent than his Middle English counterpart in *William of Palerne*, where William

freely participates in the aggressive savagery of his heraldic animal.

If we read Alphouns as tied to William's violence, then the "sanitization" of the tale serves less as a general reduction of the violence and more a further displacement of it. In this reading, we would say that the romance balances the potential threats of Alphouns and William between them: William is still a "frek" (3614), still human, but he is also nonetheless a dangerous animal to be hunted down. At the same time, Alphouns the werewolf seems more human, less monstrous, than William becomes in these battles. During the breaks in the siege battles, Alphouns repeatedly leaps into court to bow, salute, kiss feet, and generally behave as a visiting nobleman (which, as a prince, he rather is) before he quickly departs again. Alphouns's behavior at Felice's court is arguably the more human of the two — Alphouns does not hide his humanity with false-ferocity but displays his "mannes munde" (4123) beneath the furry performances. And yet in this same episode, William acts his most animalistic: he fights as viciously as any werewolf such that his desperate opponents cannot see him as anything but a murdering beast. The poem mixes the human and nonhuman animal demarcations between the two men, from Alphouns in his wolf shape and human mind to William's werewolf ferocity in human form. The romance does not allow us to forget that both men are human by the defining traits thereof but nonetheless insists on their animality. Just as Alphouns presents a human animal, so too does William breach the divide between species to break down the human exceptionalism in the definitions of man and other animals.

Conclusion

The various transformative figures in *William of Palerne* reveal an ambiguity in species definitions. The romance capitalizes on its generic conventions — fantasy and magic, humor and playful encounters — to re-incorporate the human into the animal. It continuously throws into question the definition and perception of the human and leaves it vulnerable to transformation with and through external perception. This text ultimately exposes an anxiety of species definition — its permeability, malleability, and vulnerability — within its romantic space of play. The figures in this text perform their animal/Other identities in humorous sequences that underscore the performativity of their humanity. The text's interplay of human and nonhuman animals fashions leaks between those categories, such that its characters are never purely one or the Other. Alisaundrine's gender-bending disguise; Alphouns's physical transformation into a wolf and subsequent restoration to human form; the lovers' sequence of hides sewn on and cut away; William's shield-driven reputation: the romance presents indistinct and overlapping categories of species as it identifies its figures alternatively as human and nonhuman animal.

The shape of a creature does not necessarily define its species, *William of Palerne* insists, and no matter what skin one wears, one is wrapped in an animal's hide. Even in bipedal form, exhibiting the supposedly exclusively-human rational mind, or engaging in human practices, the text does not consistently recognize the figure's humanity. Woman, wolf, bear, deer, man — these identities cannot be so easily allocated to the false oppositional categories of "human" and "animal" and nor can those categories be adequately defined or qualified without further questioning their very qualifications.

Instead, the poem implies, the Great Chain's hierarchy of animal difference bears also a double-edge in its implication of multitudinous similarities. Neither the romance nor the characters reinforce/s a defining divide between human and nonhuman animal, instead embracing the play of difference and, by extension, similarity between species.

William of Palerne, however, deconstructs the signifiers of 'man' and exposes their inability to properly define or signify the human and, in doing so, also breaks down the binary opposition of human/nonhuman animal. The human and other animals are not opposites but, as the poem intimates, sit juxtaposed upon the spectrum of animality. Like *Bevis of Hampton* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* examined in the previous chapters, *William of Palerne* illustrates a definition of humanity that is not so much tiered above nonhuman animals as it is potentially lateral to them. The poem questions and undermines the contemporary definition of human as exceptional and, in its place, invites the human to embrace its own place alongside the other animals.

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[1] For the full Latin passage, see James Dimock's *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera: Topographia Hibernica et Expugnatio Hibernica*, vol. 5, 102-103 (London: Longmans, Green, reader, and Dyer, 1867); for the English translation, see John O'Meara's edition of *The History and Topography of Ireland*, 71 (repr. 1951, New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

[2] All citation references to *William of Palerne* refer to line numbers from G.H.V. Bunt's edition of *William of Palerne: An Alliterative Romance* (Groningen, NL: Bouma's Boekhuis bv, 1985) unless otherwise specified. I have silently integrated bracketed material from Bunt's edition for ease of reading. Sections of this chapter are based on my materials and research from "Like a Second Skin: Appropriation and (Mis)interpretation of Identity in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *William of Palerne*," in *Writing on Skin in the Age of Chaucer*, eds. Nicole Nyffenegger and Katrin Rupp. Forthcoming with De Gruyter, Spring 2018.

[3] William Marvin, "Blood, Law, and Venery," in *Hunting Law and Ritual in Medieval English Literature* (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 141. See also Anne Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature* (New York: Boydell & Brewer, 1993).

[4] Sara Kay, "Legible Skins: Animals and the Ethics of Medieval Reading," *Postmedieval* 2, no. 1 (2011), 15.

[5] Ibid.; Ken Gonzales-Day, "Analytical Photography: Portraiture, from the Index to the Epidermis," *Leonardo* 35, no. 1 (2002), 29.

[6] Once more, I rely on the constructions 'human and nonhuman animal' or 'human and other animals' to avoid framing my argument around the 'human" as separate from the "animal" in general. When referring to the 'rational animal,' or a specific nonhuman animal (such as, in this case, the bear- or deerskins as animal hides), I drop the modifier 'nonhuman' as redundant.

[7] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. The English Dominican Fathers, Vol. 2 (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, ltd., 1923), 30.12, and Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of the Summa Theologica of St. Aquinas: Pars Prima*, ed. Beradus Bonjoannes (London: Thomas Baker, 1906), 1-2, 13.2. For more on definitions of the human animal as the only rational animal, see the introduction of this dissertation.

[8] The first chapter of this project explores this definition and its breakdown in *Bevis of Hampton*. Sarah Lambert investigates the cultural and theological implications of this ambiguous dividing criteria of the medieval era in general in "Cannibalism, Humanity, and the Problem of Species Definition on the Middle Ages" (paper, International Medieval Congress, Leeds, UK, July 2016).

[9] For more on the Great Chain of Being, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (1936; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); and Oliva Blanchette, "Aquinas' Conception of the Great Chain of Being: A More Considered Reply to Lovejoy," in *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages*, eds. Kent Emery, Jr., Russell L. Friedman, and Andreas Speer (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[10] For more on the various traits assigned to the definition of man in the medieval era, see John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*; and Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within*.

[11] *Middle English Dictionary (MED)*, s.v. "līk (adj.)," last modified April 2014, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/.

[12] Alexander of Hales, *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales Ordinis minorum Summa theologica*, ed. Bonaventura Marrani (Ad Claras Aquas: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1928), 576; *Book of Beasts: A Facsimile of MS. Bodley 764*, ed. by Christopher de Hamel (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2008), 22v-23v; for the English translation, see Richard Barber's *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Bodley 764* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, Inc., 1993), 58-60; John Cummins, *The Medieval Art of Hunting: The Hound and the Hawk* (repr. 1988, Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 2003), 121; and Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 66.

[13] For more on the recurrent trope of magic in medieval courtly romance, see John Finlayson, "The Marvellous in Middle English Romance," *The Chaucer Review* 33, no. 4 (1999): 363-408.

[14] For more on the genre of romance and its fantastical space of play, see the introduction to this dissertation.

[15] Geraldine Heng, "The Romance of England: *Richard Coer de Lyon* and the Politics of Race, Religion, Sexuality, and Nation," in *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 65. See also Patrick Murphy, "Dialoguing with Bakhtin over Our Ethical Responsibility to Anothers," in *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches,* eds. Axel Goodbody and Kate Rigby (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011).

[16] Heng, "The Romance of England," 74.

[17] *Gullaume de Palerne*, ed. and trans. Leslie Sconduto (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), l. 3056.

[18] *MED*, s.v. "talli (adv.)."

[19] Ibid., s.v. "*boggish, -ishi(che*, adj. & adv).")." Interestingly, the term could also be connected to "bŏuğe (n.1)," which indicates a 'bulge' or 'protuberance on an organ.' While the word typically indicates a tumor or growth, such as a hunchback, it is possibly an amusing pun on sexual organs: Alisaundrine walks to the kitchens 'bulge-like as a boy.'

[20] Ibid., s.v. "wightī (adv.)"; Ibid., s.v. "wight (n.)." While *wight* can also mean 'a specific man, woman, or child' or a nonhuman 'animal' or even 'monstrous being,' its use in this passage, with its masculine undertones, implies the added meaning of 'man-like.' The term has applied to human and nonhuman animals, such as in *Ywain and Gawain*, wherein it refers to Ywain's lion companion. See this project's introduction for further discussion.

[21] Ibid., s.v. "manlī (adv.(1))."

[22] Ibid., s.v. "medlen (v.)."

[23] Hannah Priest, "'Bogeysliche as a boye': Performing Sexuality in *William of Palerne*," in *Sexual Culture in the Literature of Medieval Britain*, ed. Amanda Hopkins, Robert Allen Rouse, and Cory James Rushton (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2014), 92; *MED*, s.v. "medlen (v.)."

[24] Priest, "'Bogeysliche as a boye,'" 93-94.
[25] *MED*, s.v. "bŏurde (n.)."
[26] Priest, "'Bogeysliche as a boye,'" 94.
[27] Ibid., 98.
[28] Heng, "The Romance of England," 65, 74.
[29] Valerie R. Hotchkiss, introduction to *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing Across Europe* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 10.
[30] Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 137-38. See also Nona C. Flores, ed., *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), especially Lesley Kordecki's "Making Animals Mean: Speciest Hermeneutics in the *Physiologus* of Theobaldus," 94; Janetta Rebold Benton's "Gargoyles: Animal Imagery and Artistic Individuality in Medieval Art," 158; and Nona C. Flores's "'Effigies Amicitiae...Veritas Inimicitiae': Antifeminism in the Iconography of the Woman-Headed Serpent in Medieval and Renaissance Art and Literature," 167-195.
[31] Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 137.
[32] *MED*, s.v. "manli (adj.)."
[33] Priest, "'Bogeysliche as a boye,'" 98, 96; Luuk A. J. R. Houwen, "'Breme Beres' and 'Hende Hertes': Appearances and Reality in William of Palerne," in *Loyal Letters: Studies on Mediaeval Alliterative Poetry and Prose*, eds. Luuk A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1994), 226; Doryjane Birrer, "A New Species of Humanities: The Marvelous Progeny of Humanism and Postmodern Theory," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 37, no. 2 (2007): 218, 229.
[34] Randy Schiff, "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal: Primal Courtliness in *Guillame de Palerne* and *William of Palerne*," *Exemplaria* 21, no. 4 (2009): 426.
[35] For more on magic — and Alsiaundrine's and Braunde's use of it in *William of Palerne* — see Priest, "'Bogeysliche as a boye,'" 88; Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 152-153; Barbara Goodman, "The Female Spell-Caster in Middle English Romances: Heretical Outsider or Political Insider," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 15 (1998): 49, 54; Schiff, "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal," 428.
[36] *William of Palerne* frequently hints at folkloric shapeshifting tropes, not only with Alphouns's werewolf transformation but also with the animal hides worn by William, Meliors, and later even Queen Felice. For example, later in the narrative, Queen Felice casts the lovers' discarded deerskins "in a hirne" (3201) — in a corner or a hiding place; *MED*, s.v. "hi͝ rn(e (n.)." The phrasing evokes the shapeshifter tropes of hiding a werewolf's clothes so he cannot return to human form (such as in *Bisclavret*), or even the opposite, found frequently in selkie tales, wherein a man hides the selkie's seal pelt so she cannot return to seal form. For more on shapeshifting folkloric motifs, see Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folk-Tales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends,* Vol 2: D-E (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955-58).
[37] Alphouns's possession of both lupine body and human mind are evocative of transhumanism, which defies human limitations. Instead, transhumanism seeks to create a being that transcends the human through technical or biological modifications — including through "the powers of other animals"; M. J. McNamee and S. D. Edwards, "Transhumanism, Medical Technology and Slippery Slopes," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 32, no. 9 (2006): 513-514, 517. While this school of thought is often forward-looking, this combination of Alphouns's physical changes and his retained sense of self evokes transhumanist modification — he is human and yet more than human, rational but defined by his powerful wolf shape. Arguably, Alphouns represents a medieval transhuman.
[38] The term used, *witt*, usually means 'human reason' but can also refer to a 'nonhuman animal's ability to understand'; *MED*, s.v. "wit (n.)." The text invites play with this word: it presents Alphouns as a rational creature, as essentially human, while it nonetheless emphasizes his altered physical form and evokes the secondary, nonhuman animal definition.
[39] Salisbury, *The Beast Within,* 130.
[40] For more on this twelfth-century prevalence of werewolf tales, see Caroline Walker Bynum, "Metamorphosis, or Gerald and the Werewolf," *Speculum* 73, no. 4 (1998): 1000; Manfred Bambeck, "Das Werwolfmotiv in 'Bisclavret,'" *Zeitschrift fur romanische Philologie* 89 (1973): 146; Salisbury, *The Beast*

Within, 160-165; Philippe Menard, "Les histoires de loup-garou au moyen age," in *Symposium in honorem prof. M. de Riquer* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 1986), 209; and Leslie Dunton-Downer, "Wolf Man," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1997), 211-212.

[41] For more on the class implications of Alphouns's procuring specifically meat and wine for the aristocratic lovers, see Schiff, "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal," 426.

[42] Priest, "'Bogeysliche as a boye,'" 98.

[43] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. The English Dominican Fathers (New York: Benzigan Bros., 1947), Q. 159, A. 2. For more on the medieval distinctions between human and nonhuman animal behavior, see the introduction to this dissertation.

[44] See Norman Hinton, "The Werewolf as *Eiron*: Freedom and Comedy in *William of Palerne*," in *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Nona Flores (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 136.

[45] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Q. 159, A. 2. Medieval Europe even possessed a well-known character called the "monastic wolf" or "lupine monk" who represented the human's carnal drives even in religious or divine figures. For more on human's base appetites as "animal" in medieval literature, see Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 750-1150* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Jonathan Morton, "Wolves in Human Skin: Questions of Animal Appetite in Jean de Dmeun's 'Roman de la Rose,'" *The Modern Language Review* 105, no. 4 (2010): 976-997; and Leah DeVun, "Animal Appetites," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 20, no. 4 (2014): 461-490.

[46] Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 4.

[47] Michelle Freeman, "Dual Natures and Subverted Glosses: Marie de France's 'Bisclavret,'" *Romance Notes* 25, no. 3 (1985): 296, emphasis added. While Freeman here discusses the 12th-century lay *Bisclavret*, the attack scenes are similarly motivated by a wrong inflicted upon the rational werewolf.

[48] Andrew Pfrenger, "'Now Kynde me Avenge': Emotion and Love of Vengeance in *Piers Plowman*," *The Chaucer Review* 50, no. 1-2 (2015): 66-67.

[49] The term *hente* can indicate to 'cut or bite off,' but the text lacks both the typical formulation *henten of* and the proper syntactic structure to indicate that definition; *MED*, s.v. "henten (v.)"; Ibid., s.v. "astranglen (v.)."

[50] The ridiculousness of this scenario is best depicted by a 2017 episode of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, wherein show host Stephen Colbert mimes being unsuccessfully 'strangled' by prop wolf paws, commenting of wolves that "strangling's not really their thing"; "North Korea, The U.S. Just Isn't That Into You," YouTube video, 1:50, from an episode televised by CBS on 08 August 2017, posted by "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," 09 August 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Va54WZgPTdY. The absurd image recalls this dissertation's introduction, in which we examined *Ywain and Gawain*'s lion as carrying a sword between his paws.

[51] Heng, "The Romance of England," 74.

[52] Despite its insistence on his rational intelligence, the text remains oddly insistent that Alphouns can still be hunted like a beast. In two instances where in Alphouns finds himself pursued as "prey" in a hunt (2177ff, 2373ff.), the romance not once but twice draws attention to how *holliche*, or 'undisputedly,' Alphouns is hunted: "so holliche to þat hunting" (2384) and "huntyng holliche þat day" (2451). Both times the text refers to the term *hunting* in this sequence, it modifies it as 'completely, entirely' — a hunt 'in every detail.' While the demands of the alliterative meter may explain this word choice and its repetition, but the phrasing nonetheless creates a strangely emphatic insistence on Alphouns's being hunted. The romance invites some conflation between the human and nonhuman categories, as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* did in the previous chapter, by allowing for a human to be hunted as prey. See *MED*, s.v. "hōllī (adv.)."

[53] The first 215 lines or so of the romance — three folios' worth — are lost. While Alphouns's transformation is revealed within the first 150 lines of the romance as we have it, within the scope of the full narrative, this detail would still be disclosed quite early in the poem — within the first 375 lines, or first 7%, of the romance.

[54] There is only one potential exception: when William sends a messenger to fetch Alphouns's step-mother Braunde, the messenger refers to Alphouns by name (4248) before referencing his cursed state as a werewolf (4249) and that Braunde must restore said wolf to his human form (4256). The messenger only uses Alphouns's name when referring to the prince pre-transformation, after which point he calls him simply "þe

werwolf" (4255). Even here, the messenger — and the text — keep Alphouns's human and nonhuman monikers distinct to his physical shape.

[55] John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 26-36; Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 147-148, 154-155. Again, for the folkloric and literary traditions of clothing/pelts tools for transformation, see Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, Vol 2: D-E.

[56] The full sequence of events is as follows: Alphouns is ashamed of his nakedness (4443), but is told not to be ashamed by Braunde (4444-4449), who then offers him a bath (4450-4451). Braunde bathes Alphonse (4452-4457), then offers him clothes, which Alphouns argues should come from William (4458-4474), and so she goes to William to acquire them (4475-4494), who finally gives Alphouns garments to wear (4495-4497).

[57] Priest, "'Bogeysliche as a boye,'" 97.

[58] Birrer, "A New Species of Humanities," 229.

[59] For more on the significance of the arming trope in identity formation, see Laura Hodges, "Remarks on Arthurian Arms And Arming Scenes," special issue, *Arthuriana*. 5, no. 4 (1995): 1-2.

[60] Bear-baiting was a popular pastime in Medieval and Early Modern England wherein a bear was chained to a sturdy pole and 'baited' with dogs or sharp sticks as entertainment. For more on this sport, see Albert Compton Reeves, *Pleasures and pastimes in Medieval England* (Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1995), esp. 101; and Oscar Brownstein, "The Popularity of Baiting in England before 1600: A Study in Social and Theatrical History," *Educational Theatre Journal* 21, no. 3 (1969): 237-250.

[61] Schiff, "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal," 432; Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk*, 32-83.

[62] *MED*, s.v. "gere (n.)."

[63] Marvin, "Blood, Law, and Venery," 141.

[64] Bynum, "Metamorphosis," 1012; Houwen, "'Breme Beres' and 'Hende Hertes,'" 227.

[65] Houwen, "'Breme Beres' and 'Hende Hertes,'" 233. While bears can and do walk in an upright posture, they primarily do so either while fighting so as to free their forelegs for combat or if their forelimbs are incapacitated, such as the somewhat infamous case of "Pedals" the bear in New Jersey. For more on the story of Pedals the bear, see Lisa W. Foderaro, "Debate in New Jersey: Is Bear That Walks Upright Suffering, or Thriving?," *New York Times*, 18 Aug 2016; and Ray Sanchez, "Was New Jersey's bipedal bear Pedals killed?," *CNN*, 15 Oct 2016.

[66] Schiff, "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal," 431.

[67] While *Guillaume de Palerne* includes the lovers' stowing away on a barge, it does include the ship boy left to guarde it and subsequently the lovers escape the boat without incident; see *Gullaume de Palerne*, ll. 4619-4632.

[68] *MED*, s.v. "tail (n.)."

[69] *MED*, s.v. "queint(e (adj.); Ibid., s.v. "cŏntenaunce (n.)."

[70] *MED*, s.v. "leik (n.)."

[71] See Schiff, "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal," 432.

[72] Houwen somewhat dryly admits that the Grecian-man and ship-boy scenes are not "devoid of humour," but he insists that these sequences mainly function to highlight the disguises' success as such. See Houwen, "'Breme Beres' and 'Hende Hertes,'" 224, 230, 233, 235, 236, 235. See also Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 146; Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Thought* (London: Routledge, 2006), 80-81 and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 110.

[73] *MED*, s.v. "crī(e (n.)."

[74] See endnote 56 concerning the text's insistence on depicting Alphouns as a hunted animal.

[75] The passage refers to the "blodhoundes bold" (2183), the "herty houndes" (2187), the "muri houndes" (2193), and, twice, simply the "houndes" (2189, 2198).

[76] While the the verb *winnen* typically indicates achieving or obtaining some desired prize, Bunt here glosses it as "persuade"; *MED*, s.v. "winnen (v.)."; *William of Palerne*, Glossary, s.v. "winne *vb. Inf.*," 480-481.

[77] Bynum, "Metamorphosis," 1012; Kate Watkins Tibbals, "Elements of Magic in the Romance of William of Palerne," *Modern Philology* 1, no 3 (1904): 358-363. While I have not found any readings of this sequence

that reference the siege as a factor in Felice's disguise, it nonetheless has a compelling textual foundation. The lovers likely hide themselves outside the city proper: they bunk down in what had been a "park" full of "wilde bestes" (2846) before the siege "it al destruyt" (2847), or destroyed it all. That the lovers do not sneak into the besieged city to find their hideaway but simply find the park already "destruyt" by the siege, implies that they lie beyond the walls and within range of the Spanish forces. Felice can watch them only because their hiding place lies "under þe paleys" (2845) and "under a coynte crag, fast bi þe quenes chaumber" (2850) — beneath the palace and under a beautiful rock projection, near the queen's chamber. To reach them, Felice departs and returns "prively" or stealthily through a "prive posterne" (3068, 3174), a secret back or side entrance. The text suggests that the lovers hide beyond the protective city walls, and so Felice's expedition to fetch them becomes a rather risky undertaking and her deerskin disguise functions more as stealth than folkloric leftover.

[78] I coded the data into several categories split among three sections: the lovers in their bearskins (172-2421), excepting Alisaundrine's dressing them in such (1704-1761) and an interlude wherein the Roman emperor interrogates Alisaundrine and confers with the Greek emperor (1930-2143); the interim between the lovers' removing the bearskins and acquiring the deerskins (2422-2589); and the lovers in their deerskin disguises (2590-3201). I split the categories themselves into primary referent used (name; human terms such as *lemman, mayde, kniȝt,*etc.; *beres*; *herte* and/or *hinde*; and nonhuman animal terms, mainly *bestes*) and their contexts of use (in characters' speech or dreams; identifying who speaks to whom; in reference to the skins or the disguises, and by the text itself). Please consider my numbers here as close estimates, as error in counting may have occurred.

[79] For more arguments concerning the Middle English translator's flexibility with the lovers' referents, see Tibbals, "Elements of Magic," 358, and Houwen, "'Breme Beres' and 'Hende Hertes,'" 227.

[80] Nearly half of the poem's references to the lovers as *bestes* include an adjectival qualification such as *swete*, *leve*, *semli*, *worþ*, or *buxom* — sweet, beloved, handsome, worthy, or gracious. The text's referring to the lovers as *buxom bestes* (2720, 2854) draws a direct parallel to Alphouns, whom Meliors herself calls "our buxom best" at least once (3085).

[81] Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 146.

[82] Marvin, "Blood, Law, and Venery," 141; *MED*, s.v. "unlāsen (v.)." See this dissertation's previous chapter.

[83] *MED*, s.v. "gailī (adv.)."

[84] To be fair to the maid, however, William's and Meliors' deerskins have greatly weathered and are likely quite "hidous": "Þe hote sunne hade so hard þe hides stived" (3033), or the hot sun had so hard stiffened the hides that, as mentioned earlier, the queen could see the clothing beneath (3033-3035). While some editors have glossed *stiven* as 'sun-cracked', the term typically means 'to stiffen' or to 'become rigid,' 'harden'; *MED*, s.v. "stīven (v.(1))." Approaching "þroli" (3176) or frighteningly in their unnaturally rigid and potentially cracking skins, the lovers no doubt look rather monstrous despite how the text and its characters treat them as convincingly portraying deer.

[85] Houwen, "'Breme Beres' and 'Hende Hertes,'" 237.

[86] *MED*, s.v. "fē̆ld (n.)."

[87] Ibid., "right (n.)."

[88] Renee Ward, "Politics of Translation Sanitizing Violence in *William of Palerne*," *Studies in Philology* 112, no. 3 (2015): 477-479, 480-481.

[89] In fact, the current state of King Ebrouns's horse is almost precisely the same as *Bevis of Hampton*'s Arondel, discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation: both steeds refuse to allow anyone but their masters (or their issue) to ride them, must be chained up and fed by intricate means to keep distance between them and the grooms, burst free from their chains upon perceiving their master to cavort and neigh in celebration, and imbue it the titular hero an overwhelming desire to possess them. See also *The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, edited by Eugen Kölbing (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trübner & Co., 1885-94), 1525-1534, 2027-2030, 2157-2178. The recurring pattern of this sequence across romances of the fourteenth century (specifically romances with twelfth-century French or Anglo-Norman extants) seems to indicate that even as these texts approach the matter of the rational nonhuman animal in different manners, they share this moment of agreement. The bonds between a horse and his knight betray a level of traditionally human thought and affect in a distinctly nonhuman physical animal.

[90] Helmut Nickel, "Arthurian Armings for War and for Love," *Arthuriana* 5, no. 4 (1995): 14.
[91] Henry L. Savage, "The Significance of the Hunting Scenes in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 27, no. 1 (1928): 8.
[92] *MED*, s.v. "wē̆lden (v.)."
[93] Annabel Wharton, "Icon, Idol, Totem, and Fetish," in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium*, ed. by Antony Eastmond and Liz James (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003), 7.
[94] Moreover, this totemic use of heraldry can be read as undermining human exceptionalism through transhumanism, which advocates the modification of human through technical and biological means to transcend the human entirely. See McNamee and Edwards, "Transhumanism," 513-514.
[95] Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 137.
[96] *Guillaume de Palerne*, 64n31.
[97] Renée Ward, "Politics of Translation," 469-489. From this point, mentions of Guillaume refer to the main character of the French *Guillaume de Palerne*, while "William" continues to refer to that of the Middle English *William of Palerne*.
[98] Ibid., 477, 478.
[99] Ibid., 478-479.
[100] Ibid., 480-481.
[101] Ibid., 484.

Conclusion: The Medieval Animal as Theoretical Prototype

> So in peace our task we ply,
> Pangur Bán, my cat, and I;
> In our arts we find our bliss,
> I have mine and he has his.
>
> - Robin Flowers, "Pangur Bán"[1]

> It is an important and popular fact that things are not always what they seem. For instance, on the planet Earth, man had always assumed that he was more intelligent than dolphins because he had achieved so much — the wheel, New York, wars and so on — while all the dolphins had ever done was muck about in the water having a good time. But conversely, the dolphins had always believed that they were far more intelligent than man — for precisely the same reasons.
>
> - Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*[2]

Medieval romance often questioned and played with contemporary conceptions of the human and nonhuman animal, and its generic conventions of magic and humor enabled the literature to push at these definitions in a way that few other genres safely could.[3] The fourteenth-century in particular was a site of geocultural exploration, as Middle English romances expanded, revised, and refocused their translations of their twelfth-century Anglo-Norman and French predecessors.

Nonhuman animals are not only rational in *Bevis of Hampton*, but also have intrinsic value and, the poem suggests, possibly even a soul. The horse Arondel reciprocates an affective bond with Bevis and the two participate in a chivalric partnership that the Middle English seems emphatically to depict. While Arondel remains in a constant state of becoming-hero, the horse's perpetual potential in that becoming activates the invitation to pray for an equine soul that, while never fully enabled, the text nonetheless never withdraws.

While lacking a specific French or Anglo-Norman extant source, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* plays upon and adapts the long-standing French romance tradition. In this poem, the human can be hunted as any other animal, and the framework of the hunt structures the romance and the figures therein: they engage with and participate in this overarching frame of the hunt, which acts not as metaphor but as primary interpretive lens for Gawain's courtly trials in the bedroom and at the Green Chapel and, by extension, Morgan Le Faye's test of the Round Table. Within this frame, Gawain's scarred neck and the green girdle, which he takes as symbols of chivalric failure, function instead as symbols of his skinned hide that he has redefined in order to try to articulate his traumatic encounter at the Green Chapel.

Human skinning becomes a recurring image in *William of Palerne*, as the romance renders human and nonhuman categories nearly indistinct. Instead, the characters freely perform the nonhuman and vacillate between human and nonhuman identities: performance and perception obscure species until, identities transformed, the disguised figures cannot extricate themselves from their nonhuman states without engaging in human

practices — and yet even here, the human remains animal. The ease with which one animal becomes another, and the difficulty of removing the human from the animal category, exposes the always already differing and deferred distinctions between the human and nonhuman animal.

These romances suggest that, while the twelfth century boasts a turning point in contemporary cultural thinking on nonhuman animals — saints' lives in particular, as Joyce Salisbury concludes, render the nonhuman as possessing some intrinsic value and a rich emotional existence independent of human projection[4] — the fourteenth-century romance hosts a full and considered exploration of the rational nonhuman, one that warrants further research. However, the implications of this project, as I mentioned in my introduction, reach beyond just these three texts and, even, beyond the fourteenth century. I hope that this dissertation may open further avenues for new pedagogical approaches to and/or different lenses through which to interpret medieval texts and that this project may offer new contexts for theoretical applications. Here in my conclusion, having presented my evidence and argument, I explore those statements in more depth.

For one, this dissertation gestures toward an overall trend in medieval romance: the Middle English tradition seems more concerned with portraying the definitions of human and nonhuman animal as less separate or hierarchized than the Anglo-Norman or French traditions. This project may spark a review of the primary literature through the lens of reparative ecocriticism. Take, for example, Gawain and Gringalet: this chivalric pair appears across multiple texts in the Arthurian tradition, in romances across Europe throughout the Middle Ages from Gawain's first appearance with Gringalet in the eleventh-

century *How Culhwch Won Olwen*.[5] While we can read at least a one-sided affective bond between the two in *L'atre Périlleux*[6] and the potential for nonhuman animal communication in *Livre de Arture*[7] — both thirteenth-century French romances — the most telling passages come from the German romances. In the Middle English, Gawain stops mid-battle to weep and lament over his slayn steed in the fifteenth-century *The Awntrys off Arthur* (541ff.).[8] In fourteenth-century Middle Dutch romances, Gringalet recognizes Gawain's voice and breaks free from a would-be thief in *Walewein ende Keye* (768ff.)[9] and Gawain displays an intense emotional investment in Gringalet that is endearingly reciprocated by Gringalet in the *Roman van Moriaen*.[10] While the French/Norman tradition does, to some degree, participate in questioning the human/nonhuman definitions of Aquinas and the Great Chain, it is not to the same degree as the more Germanic traditions. Perhaps this is due to a geographical, cultural, or even proto-national conception of identity: Middle Dutch and Middle English romances produce cultural identity through and with nonhuman animal relationships and definitions. Or, at least, the Middle English romance tradition is more concerned with these questions of rationality and human/nonhuman relationships, as their poets expanded or elaborated on the narratives so as to better play on the always differing and always deferring distinctions between the human and other animals.

In discussing that play of human/nonhuman animal definitions, my dissertation implicates the ecocritical in the affective experience. If witnesses can experience shared emotions with nonhuman animals or even fictional representations of affect, then audiences of these romances can, in theory, share in the affect of the nonhuman animals therein. In

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, for example, audiences read in precise detail not only the hunting and skinning of game animals but also Gawain's own hunt and pseudo-skinning. While Gawain fills the role of hunted human, the romance's audience fills the role of witness: it sees and, to some degree, shares in the experiences related in the romance. Audiences can be the hunters or the hunted or even both — the audience, in relating to the romance's main character and his struggles, may enter into a shared affective state and themselves experience some of Gawain's trauma. The Round Table similarly experiences Gawain's trauma when the latter relates his tale to his fellow Arthurian knights, but Gawain's brethren misunderstand the trauma — they fail to enter a state of shared emotions with Gawain. However, the audience remains privy to the full tale in all details and are not constrained by Gawain's biased retelling. The audience can, as Gawain did, become a hunted and skinned animal by participating in the romance as witnesses and through identification with narrative content.

I hope that my dissertation's use of affect theory encourages others to reassess how scholars in the medieval period might have applied it. Primarily, scholars of medieval literature focus on affect theory as the study of emotions and write frequently about the "history" of emotion and affect in penitential literature, though some, like Barbara Rosenwein, have meta-analyzed how scholars utilize affect theory and proposed methodologies therefor.[11] This dissertation seeks to utilize affect theory's robust toolset beyond the study or history of emotions and to urge scholars of medieval literature to explore other affective lenses and the interpretive alternatives they offer.

Nonetheless, while this dissertation's use of affect theory seeks to apply a less emotion-focused lens, its recourse to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *becomings* raises a few questions of its own. Of most interest to my project, however, is the question of 'Can nonhuman animals enter states of becoming?' To enter a state of becoming requires one to imitate or perform with "with enough feeling, with necessity and composition" to project that which is imitated.[12] Of course, we must question if other animals possess sufficient awareness of themselves and the world to formulate a concept of both their own consciousness and the world independent of that self-recognition. We know, for example, that we can train other animals to mimic human behaviors — we can teach a bear to dance, a dog to shake hands, a seal to wave, etc. — but are these nonhuman animals aware of their performance and their place within it? Are they capable of imbuing their performance with feeling, necessity, and composition so as to project the human? Higher nonhuman primates can learn to and successfully communicate with humans through visual languages,[13] but can we say their imitation enters them into a state of becoming-human?

My research implies that the answer might be yes, at least for nonhuman animals in medieval romance's realm of fantasy and magic where, as shown in this project, the nonhuman can be read as rational. In this genre's space of play, a horse or a lion or a wolf, as rational animals, can sufficiently imitate human practices — can perform with feeling, necessity, composition — so as to enter a state of becoming-human. We read of Ywain's lion in *Ywain and Gawain* attempting to throw himself on a sword out of suicidal grief, and the text gives us no doubt about whether this nonhuman animal possesses enough self-awareness to perform such human acts.[14] States of becoming, after all, never enter into the

realm of *become*, but instead remain in a perpetual state of process. The nonhuman animals do not become human but are capable of entering that middle state of potential. Even if we argue that the nonhuman animal is not sufficiently self-aware to consciously enter a state of becoming, they can, still, project a human from the perspective of the witness — who is, in this case, the reader or audience of romance. A human audience can see and perceive a becoming-humanness from another animal: we see Koko the gorilla perform a series of hand-signs with her handler and we perceive her as not-ape and not-human — she is an ape gesturing beyond her species toward the human even while she never stops being ape and never becomes human. We do not necessarily argue whether or how much Koko understands the hand-signs as language because we perceive the gorilla's performance of communication as genuine, as having feeling and necessity and composition. Nonhuman animals, then, can enter states of becoming through their own self-aware imitation of human behaviors and/or through the perception of their performance's witnesses.

While becomings may not be limited to human animals alone, my project suggests that humans use nonhuman animals as another sort of becoming: heraldic devices, often reliant on nonhuman animals or objects in their design, follows a totemic system of representation and empowerment that, in turn, pushes its wielder into a sort of becoming. I mention this potential intersection between the two identification systems in my discussion of William's werewolf shield in the third chapter's analysis of *William of Palerne*. Considering the definition of totems as provided by Annabel Wharton,[15] the key features and functions of totems fit well with those of heraldic devices, especially in romance depictions. Arguably, heraldic devices imbue users with power even outside of

the magical conventions of romance, as bearing the symbol of one's reputation can effect affective reactions in both the symbol-bearing knight and his opponent. Both perceive the heraldic symbol and respond accordingly: the former may experience a boost in morale or a heightened psychological state by carrying the heraldic symbol — perhaps like a sports team reaffirming their prowess and "getting pumped up" before a game, as they seek to inhabit the traits of their team mascot and enter a mild state of becoming — while the latter may experience dread, fear, or lowered morale — not unlike the oppressive "watched" feeling certain portraits can give viewers or the uneasiness someone with severe allergies feels when they see the yellow-black shape of a bee.[16] And so, in a psychological sense, heraldic symbols can empower their bearers with their represented traits.

However, scholars have historically approached totems in what we may now identify as a problematic, Eurocentric manner, and consequently sociologists and folklorists consistently categorized totemic systems as primitive or Other.[17] To find totemic structures in the heraldic system may, from that perspective, degentrify a significant and long-standing aristocratic tradition. At the very least, the similar — even near identical — traits of the two systems suggest that the regulated and heavily classed nature of heraldic devices finds its roots in a common human practice.

However, while totemic and heraldic systems boast a long history of use and study, my dissertation may bear implications for newer fields of study: in my introduction, I stated that this research can be applied to forward-looking fields like transhumanism. Transhumanism bases itself on human modification, typically through technical, cybernetic, medical, and/or biological means, to transcend human limitations and, further,

the human itself. While the movement raises some concerning questions — mainly, opponents ask how we will know that the transhuman, after sufficient modification, can still be considered "human" or if the very definition of human will need to be modified and what that means for unmodified humans, etc. — most can argue that transhumans already exist via prosthetic limbs, implants, medications, and even performance-enhancing drugs of all kinds, from caffeine to steroids.[18]

Of note here, transhumanism also asserts that this modification can also be gained through "the power of other animals," and several of the literary figures examined in this dissertation could, by that paradigm, represent a medieval transhumanism.[19] Primarily, I briefly identified the werewolf Alphouns and the knight William of *William of Palerne* as potential medieval transhumans in the third chapter of this project: both characters find themselves enhanced beyond the human by nonhuman means — Alphouns with his wolf body and William with his totemic werewolf shield. Both defy human limitations with these added biological and technical modifications to their capabilities, such that Alphouns and William can, by the definition of transhumanism, represent literary prototypes for more modern fields of human enhancement.

We can read heraldry itself, with its totemic imbuing of power, as a system of transhumanistic enhancement, and, moreover, the chivalric unit of knight-and-horse as a transhuman conglomerate. While some scholars have read the passionate bond between knight and horse as creating a singular posthuman identity of the chivalric unit, a la Jeffrey Jerome Cohen,[20] that single unit can be recast as a transhuman identity: not only does this definition of "human" depend upon and incorporate nonhuman components, but these

components — i.e., the horse — act as biological modifications that push the human knight beyond human limitations. Horses lend knights their strength and speed, and if we read the two creatures as forming Cohen's single identity, then that human becomes a different type of animal altogether: the knight transcends his human boundaries to become something more, or even something better, than the unmodified human. Considering, too, knights use horses to physically and symbolically elevate themselves above the lower classes,[21] the horse both metaphorically and literally raises knights above unhorsed/unmodified humans. Transhumanism, at least in its core concepts, may not be so young a movement, and we can trace its shape in the medieval chivalric system as well as in the literary human animal.

While the concept of the human animal is hardly a new one, this dissertation suggests that the definition of the human as an exceptional, rational animal did not go unquestioned in medieval romance. The genre's space of play enabled romance to explore and even undermine the distinctions between human and nonhuman animals, and the literary medieval animal, fraught with implications for the human animal and the rational nonhuman, functions as a pre-modern interpretive model of self-conception: geo-cultural or even proto-national identity-building, human-becoming-prey and nonhuman-becoming-human, totemic underpinnings that merge self- and heraldic-recognition, and even transhumanist modification through composite human/nonhuman units. Medieval literature, particularly medieval romance, revises the paradigm of the rational animal in such a way as to undermine its presumption of human exceptionalism and reinscribe the human into the category of animal.

[1] See Robin Flower's translation of the ninth-century Irish poem "Pangur Bán," in *The Oxford Book of Irish Verse: XVIIth century - XXth century*, edited by Donagh Macdonagh and Lennox Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 187-188.

[2] See Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, in *The Ultimate Hitchhiker's Guide* (1979; New York: Wings Books, 1996), 105.

[3] For more on medieval definitions of the human and nonhuman animal, see the introduction to this dissertation.

[4] Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 151ff. For further discussion of this turning point in medieval literature, see this project's introduction.

[5] Maud Burnett McInerney, "Gauvain and Gringalet: Comic Masculinities in *Paien de Maisières*," *Arthuriana* 24, no. 1 (2014): 16, 23.

[6] Gawain's Gawain's concern for Gringalet, while companionate and endearing, does not seem reciprocated by Gringalet *L'Atre Périlleux* (esp. 845ff.). See *The Perilous Cemetery (L'Atre Périlleux)*, ed. Nancy B. Black (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994).

[7] When Gringalet (and Guinevere atop him) are abducted, a knight Eliezer and a horse both hear and recognize Gringalet's distressed neighs and then respond to his cries (67.7ff.). See *Le Livre d'Artur*, in *Supplement*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer, Vol. 7 of The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances (Washington, DC: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1913).

[8] Galeron, Gawain's opponent, seems to react to Gawain's mourning with confusion and dread (562-563). See *The Awntyrs off Arthur*, in *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hahn, 178-201 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995). For more discussion of knights stopping in battle to mourn their horses — and the implication of intrinsic value therein — see chapter one of this dissertation.

[9] *Walewein ende Keye*, in *Dutch Romances, Vol. III: Five Romances from the Lancelot Compilation*, eds. David F. Johnson and Geert H. M. Claassens, 368-523 (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2003).

[10] When separated and tormented, the knight and steed reunite with equal fervor upon recognizing each other (2627-2643) — Gringalet even gently tugs Gawain's sleeve in "vrinscepen" ["friendship"] (2643). See *Moriaen*, ed. H. Paardekooper-van Buuren and M. Gysseling (Zutphen, NL: Thieme & Cie, 1971).

[11] A notable exception lies in Randy Schiff's use of Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's concept of *becomings* in his article "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal: Primal Courtliness in *Guillaume de Palerne* and *William of Palerne*," *Exemplaria* 21, no 4 (2009): 418-438. For more on emotions and the methodological approaches to their study in the Middle Ages, see Barbara H. Rosenwein's "Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions," *History Compass* 8, no. 8 (2010): 828-842 and *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), as well as Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also Anne McTaggart, *Shame and Guilt in Chaucer* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Clare Costley King'oo, *Miserere Mei: The Penitential Psalms in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012); Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Holly A. Crocker, "Medieval Affects Now," *Exemplaria* 29, no. 1 (2017): 82-98; and Stephanie Trigg, "Introduction: Emotional Histories — Beyond the Personalization of the Past and the Abstraction of Affect Theory," *Exemplaria* 26, no. 1 (2014): 3-15.

[12] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone, 1988), 275.

[13] For more on higher primates learning human language and practices, see Fred C. C. Peng, ed., *Sign Language and Language Acquisition in Man and Ape: New Dimensions in Comparative Pedolinguistics*, American Association for the Advancement of Science (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978); Francys Subiaul, "What's Special about Human Imitation? A Comparison with Enculturated Apes," *Behavioral*

Sciences 6, no. 3 (2016): 1-26; and Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, Stuart G. Shanker, and Talbot J. Taylor, *Apes, language and the human mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[14] *Ywain and Gawain*, Early English Text Society 254, eds. Albert B. Friedman and Norman T. Harrington (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), ll. 2072ff.. For further discussion of this scene, see the introduction to this dissertation.

[15] Annabel Wharton, "Icon, Idol, Totem, and Fetish," in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium*, ed. by Antony Eastmond and Liz James (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003), 7.

[16] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Sayaka Ito and Toshiyuki Yamashita, "Applying Rough Set to Analyze Psychological Effect of Mascot Character Design," *International Journal of Affective Engineering* 13, no 3 (2014): 159-165; and Bateson, Melissa Bateson, et al., "Do Images of 'Watching Eyes' Induce Behaviour That Is More Pro-Social or More Normative? A Field Experiment on Littering," *PLoS One* 8, no. 12 (2013): n.pag.

[17] For more on the history of sociological and folkloric categorizations of "primitive" cultures, see Giuseppe Cocchiara, *The History of Folklore in Europe*, trans. John N. McDaniel (1952; Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1981), esp 168ff., 375ff., and 410; Richard Dorson's *Folklore and Folklife*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1792), esp. 38; and Alan Dundes, ed., *The Study of Folklore*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965).

[18] M. J. McNamee and S. D. Edwards, "Transhumanism, Medical Technology and Slippery Slopes," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 32, no. 9 (2006): 513-514.

[19] Ibid., 517.

[20] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

[21] Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 46; Susan Crane, "Knight and Horse," in *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 139-140.

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